THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE SIKHS (1947-78)

Dr. Gurcharan Singh
35/9A Chandigarh

Containing Chapters On

PEPSU, AISSF, EVOLUTION OF THE DEMAND FOR SIKH HOMELAND AND THE PRINCESS BAMBA COLLECTION

GUR RATTAN PAL SINGH

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By

Gur Rattan Pal Singh



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DEDICATED TO THE COMING GENERATIONS WHO ARE EXPECTED TO BE WISER AFTER GOING THROUGH THE OMISSIONS AND COMMISSIONS OF THEIR FOREFATHERS

PEOPLE WILL NOT LOOK FORWARD TO POSTERITY, WHO NEVER LOOK BACKWARD TO THEIR ANCESTORS.

(Edmund Burke)

A few words about the Author & the Book

S. Gur Rattan Pal Singh was born with a silver spoon in his mouth at Kurali, about 17 miles away from Chandigarh, in 1936. His uncle, late S. Gurdial Singh and his father, S. Gur Iqbal Singh, were known as Rais and Sardars of Kurali as they owned the largest urban and agricultural property in Kurali and also have been the pillars of Panthic edifice of Kharar and Rupar Sub-Divisions for four decades. During Master Tara Singh's presidentship, the author's father, a saintly and a highly respectable man, indeed, was the member of the Working Committee of the Akali Dal. In 1960—Akali mass agitation, S. Gur Iqbal Singh and his son, the author, courted arrest and remained in various jails for about a year. During their absence, their business suffered an irretrievable set-back and S. Gur Iqbal Singh had to leave Kurali and shift to his agricultural farm at Banur which had previously been left almost un-attended.

After passing his Matriculation Examination in First Division from Khalsa High School, Kurali, the author joined Government College, Rupar, from where he graduated in 1956. He was elected the General Secy. and in the subsequent year, the President, of the all powerful Government College Students' Union. He along with his younger brother S. Gur Jas Pal Singh, now, an advocate, joined double course at Muslim University, Aligarh, from where he qualified M. A. in high second class and Bachelor of Law with distinction in 1958. I have been hearing very often, the author quoting Prof. Mohd. Habib, who was his teacher in Political Science. His professor seems to have influenced his personality a lot. I had the pleasure to go through all the certificates and the testimonials issued to him by the Heads of various departments and their perusal bears ample testimony to his being an outstanding student both in studies as well as debates. He is a versatile speaker in English language and is capable of making the audience spellbound. After qualifying the proficiency in law examination from Delhi University, he joined as a lecturer in Mata Gujri College, Fatehgarh Sahib. Late Principal Naranjan Singh, brother of Master Tara Singh, who was the Principal of the above institution, felt highly enamoured of him and was not ready to leave him but he switched on to law profession in 1960 and since then he has been forging ahead in the profession. In 1972, Jathedar Mohan Singh Tur included him in the Akali

Mohan Sr Tur

Dal Working Committee. In 1973, S. Gurcharan Singh Tohra, President SGPC, appointed him as one of the members of 41—member All India Sri Guru Singh Sabha Shatabadi Committee.



In the picture, the author is seen addressing the members of the Shatabdi Committee in Teja Singh Sumundri Hall in 1973. Sant Gurmukh Singh, High Highness Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh Bagrian, S. Dhanna Singh Gulshan, S. Bishan Singh Sumundri, and S. Rajinder Singh Bhatia can be seen.

I have the privilege to go through the present book carefully. Since the author knows every Sikh leader intimately and he has also been in the forefront in all the Panthic activities, he has been able to acquaint the readers with first-hand information about Sikh politics after partition. The contents of this book are descriptive but the stirring and though-provoking comments move as softly and gently as a dove in the air. This interesting and informative book containing delightful but brief bio-graphical sketches of almost every Sikh leader is the product of a painstaking and laborious work spread over a period of two and half years. "The Illustrated History of the Sikhs (1947—78)" which is sure to serve as a reference book is remarkable for its freshness, usefulness and wide dimensions. It is bound to be enthusiastically admired by young and old, intelligentia and simple folk alike.

March 19, 1979. AMRIK SINGH ADVOCATE,

Kharar.

PREFACE

"Na sataish ki tamanna na
sile ki parva

Gar nehin hain mere ashaar
men maani na sahi." *(Ghalib)*

(*"I seek no praise; nor do I care for reward*
If my couplets have no meaning, be it so")[1].

While writing particularly for the posterity, I am conscious of my sacred duty to unmask the facts as they are. I sincrely wished not to impart unpleasant facts and comments but then it would have been at the cost of reality, truthfulness and objectivity. Some of the details, though relevant, may not be of much interest to the present generation but the succeeding generations are sure to be enlightened as to what happened during 1947-78.

I do not make tall claims but I do submit that whatever has been written has been done so spontaneously, fearlessly and with malice towards none. Whenever I think of the Sikhs' present history the famous lines of Dr. Iqbal flash across my mind: "*Khawab se bedar hota hai agar mehkum to, phir sula deti hai usko hukamran ki sahri.*" (Whenever a subject nation stands awakened to its rights and struggles to attain them, the adroit sorcery of the rulers manages to lull it to sleep again) Where it is necessary for the Sikhs to make every endeavour to become the ideal citizens of this Country and to join its mainstream, it is equally obligatory on the part of the majority community to be broad-minded and large-hearted towards the minorities which yearn for more love, and friendliness.

I record my gratitude to all whose valuable pieces of writings had been reproduced in this book. I am also indebted to S/Shri M. S. Randhawa, R.R. Sharma, J.M. Sharma and Surinder Pandit, the Trustee, the General Manager, the News Editor and the Librarian of the Tribune respectively for their active co-operation. Thanks are also due to Dr. Jagdish Sharma (Head Librarian of Pb. University) and Mr Wazir Chand

[1]Translation by Mr. Prem Sagar Sharma.

of D.D. Library Chandigarh for rendering great assistance. M/s. Bhuptej Brothers, Giani Sulakhan Singh Adv. also helped me a lot in getting rare photographs and documents. Special thanks are due to Giani Harbhagat Singh Narangwal who has been a great source of inspiration to me.

"The Auspicious Day has dawned !

The Hour is fixed for my wedding with my Lord !

Come, comrades! Assemble and make rejoicings,

Anoint the bride with oil and pour on her your blessings !

Comrades ! Pray, the bride may meet Her Lord!

GUR RATTAN PAL SINGH,

3036/21 D,
Chandigarh.

March 19, 1979

Errata

Page	Line	
1	1 line from top	Put and after Faridkot
7	18 line from top	for Ass read Aas
9	2 line from top	for doen read done
13	1 line from top	delete 'used'
13	10 line from ,,	for Duryadhana read Duryodhana
23	1 line from top	for Sworn read sworn
25	7 line from top	for Thather read Thaither
29	1 line under tbe picture of Mrs. Baljit Kaur	for second read third
31	Last line below the picture	for left read right
41	Last line from the top	for 4 & 6 read 4 to 6
75	Fist line of the Foot Note	for Jogidu read Jogindera
87	Last line from the top	for Contiuued read Continued
113	9 line from the top	for privilleged read privileged
117	12 line from the top	for priviligentia read privilegentia
118	11 line from the top	for July 10 read July 20
132	4 ,, from the top of the picture	for Pnnjab read Punjab
151	10 line from the top	for reversc read reverse
199	Last line of the picture	for you read your
228	Last line below the picture	for Fvie read Five
287	3rd line below thepicture	for L to R read R to L
289	15 line from the top	for Jagindar read Jagirdar
326	Last line from the top	for touh read touch
342	3rd line of the caption of the picture from the bottom	for religien read religion

CONTENTS

PATIALA AND THE EAST PUNJAB STATES UNION

ALL INDIA SIKH STUDENTS' FEDERATION

EVOLUTION OF THE DEMAND FOR SIKH HOMELAND

THE PRINCESS BAMBA COLLECTION

1947—1978

Patiala and the East Punjab States Union

Formation :

Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot, Kapurthala and Malerkotla were the Sikh States in the East Punjab before the integration of Indian States in 1948. The first four States were Sikh States, while the Phulkian States consisted of Patiala, Nabha and Jind, as their common ancestor was Phul, who "was descended from Baryam, to whom Emperor in 1526 had granted the *Chaudhrayat* (office of revenue collector) of the waste country to the south-west of Delhi. Phul received a *firman* from Emperor Shah Jahan continuing to him this office. From his eldest son descended families of Nabha and Jind and from his second the Patiala family. The Faridkot family, which was founded in the middle of sixteenth century sprang from the same stock as the Phulkian chiefs. These four Sikh States were under the suzerainty of Maharajah Ranjit Singh, but by the Treaty of Amritsar of 1809 they came under British protection. The remaining two States were Kapurthala and Malerkotla. The Kapurthala rulers belonged to the Ahluwalia family. The real founder of the family was Rajah Jessa Singh, a contemporary of Nadir Shah. The Malerkotla rulers were Sherwani Afghans who traced their descent from Sheikh Sadruddin, who had received a gift of sixty-eight villages near Ludhiana in East Punjab when he married the daughter of Sultan Bahlol Lodi. These States lay in three separate blocks. The main block comprising the territories of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Malerkotla and Faridkot was in the centre of East Punjab and was fairly compact. Kapurthala State, composed of two enclaves in the Jullundur district, was in the north of East Punjab. The outlying districts of Narnaul, Dadri and Bawal, which formed parts of Patiala, Jind and Nabha States respectively, lay with the geographical orbit of the southern districts of East Punjab. There were also islands of Patiala State in what is now Himachal Pradesh.

Before partition the Sikhs constituted the majority community in Faridkot; the Muslims in Kapurthala, and the Hindus in Jind. In Patiala, the Sikhs formed, according to census of 1941, 47.3 per cent of the total population. The partition and the consequent two-way

migration materially affected the population ratio in these States. In Patiala especially there was a rise in the ratio of Sikhs because of the large influx into the State of refugees belonging to that community."[1]

There were divergent opinions relating to the integration of the above States. On February 11, 1948, Giani Kartar Singh, the then President of Akali Dal, suggested the formation of the Union of Sikh States and it was to be a responsible government. He was opposed to the idea of merging those States with East Punjab, as it would further undermine the Sikhs' position who had already suffered tremendously because of the partition of Punjab. On 22/2, there was a much advertised proposal to form a Unit of 4 States of East Punjab consisting of Nabha, Kapurthala Faridkot and Malerkotla, but that proposal fizzled out as the rulers of those States were not agreeable. According to that plan, only a few departments were to be governed jointly, and it was to be a constitution of loosely-knit federation comprised of two Houses : the Upper House consisting of the Rulers of the States and the Lower House comprising of the representatives of the people. The Upper House could send the decision to the Lower House for revision, however, if the Lower House passed the resolution thrice, the same was to become law automatically. Among the small States, the consensus of opinion was to merge with East Punjab, as the smaller States were surrounded on all sides by the East Punjab.

Maharaja of Patiala was opposed to the merger as is quite clear from his speech made at a largely attended public meeting at Patiala on March 9, 1948, where he declared that Patiala would remain Patiala and it would maintain its Sikh character and would not merge with any province, while S. Ujjal Singh, the then M.L.A., stated at Delhi on 13.3 48, that there should be Union of East Punjab States. However, Mr. V.P. Menon, who had been the Constitutional Adviser to the Governor General from 1942 till the transfer of power in August 1947, gave another version in his book 'The Story of the Integration of the Indian States': "When some of the Sikh leaders—mainly those having pro-Akali sympathies—saw that States could be merged with neighbouring provinces, they sponsored a plan for merging the Punjab State with East Punjab. The chief exponent of this idea was Giani Kartar Singh... On the other hand, Natianalist Sikh opinion (which was not however very vocal) was in favour of a separate Union of all the Punjab States. Its leader was Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke, who was particularly opposed to the merger of these States in East Punjab. The Rajah of Faridkot, supported by some Akali Sikh leaders, was toying with the idea of a Union of Faridkot, Jind,

Kapurthala and Nabha—excluding Patiala, in the hope that he would be enabled to play a decisive part in Sikh politics. But Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke was definitely against the formation of any Union which did not include Patiala. What he favoured was a seperate Union of all the Punjab States. Such a Union, he thought, would operate as a stablizing factor in Sikh politics, which had at the time become vitiated by a variety of personal factors.

As regards other Punjab State rulers, the Maharaja of Jind had no interest in political affairs. At the time of the integration, the Maharaja of Kapurthala was a very old man indeed; he died a year or so after the formation of the new Union. The Maharaja of Nabha had always been dominated by people around him and was mainly concerned with *shikar* and similar pursuits. The Nawab of Malerkotla was a man of undoubtedly pleasant manners; all the same, I could not dispel the feeling that he was one of those whose attitude towards life was governed largely by self-interest.

The Maharaja of Patiala was of course the most important of the rulers in this area. The house of Patiala enjoyed the distinction of having been blessed by the tenth Sikh Guru as his own. The area, population and revenue of Patiala State exceeded those of all the rest of the East Punjab States put together. The Maharaja had rendered great service to the nation by standing solidly against the manoeuvres of the group of rulers who were anxious to evolve 'Third Force' out of the States.

On 5 May the covenant was signed by the rulers of all the eight States, the Maharaja of Patiala signing also on behalf of the minor ruler of Kalsia... Before the covenant was actually signed, Giani Kartar Singh had come to me to advocate the merger of these States with East Punjab. This was a view also shared by Sardar Baldev Singh, who was Defence Minister at that time. I explained the policy of the States Ministry in detail to Giani Kartar Singh. I pointed out to him, firstly, that in view of the stress and strain to which East Punjab was subject at the time it would be most undesirable to burden that province with additional territory. It would take some time for the administration and politics of East Punjab to become stabilized. Further, the Government of India felt a special responsibility to ensure that these States, particularly as they were border States, should be organized on proper and efficient lines. The politics of East Punjab, as well as of these States, were in a state of flux. While the communities concerned had every right to safeguard their own particular interests, this should not be to the detriment of the country as a whole. Until, therefore, a firm and lasting position was established in

which there was a clear understanding and amity between the important sections, it would be safer to keep the Punjab States as a separate entity. Giani Kartar Singh was apparently satisfied with this explanation. When the covenant was signed, the decision was applauded by the Nationalist Sikhs, as well as by Akali leaders including Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh."

On May 5, 1948, Patiala and East Punjab States Union, hereinafter called PEPSU, was formed, and the covenant was signed, while the inauguration of the uniting States was to be done on July 15, 1948.



(The Rulers of PEPSU)

(R to L) Raja Harinder Singh of Faridkot; Mr. V.P. Menon, Constitutional Adviser to the Governor General; Rulers of Kapurthala, Nabha, Patiala, Nalagarh, Jind, Kalsia and Malerkotla respectively

Patiala State

So far the history of the Patiala family is concerned, there are divergent opinions. After perusing the records, now, in the custody of (Maharaja) Amar Inder Singh, son of Maharaja Yadavindra Singh, the Patiala family traces its descent to Maharaja GAJ, who founded the town of Gazni now in Afghanistan in the first quarter of the sixth century A.D. His descendants, Maharawal Jaisal, founded the State of Jaisalmer and it is from his grand son Rao Hans Raj that the Patiala dynasty descended. However, Tawarikh Guru Khalsa written by Giani Gian Singh, traces the Patiala family's descent to Chaudhri Phul, a Sidhu Jat [1] in "Malwa Country" and the Chaudhri belonged to the 23rd generation of the family of Bhatti Rajputs When Bhim Mal came to Punjab in 1237 B.K., he helped Shahabuddin Gauri, in his attack on Delhi and in lieu of that, he was given the area comprised in Hissar, Sirsa, etc. and in 1251 B.K., he built a fort in Hissar town. After his death, his son Jawand Rao succeeded and he had twenty-one sons. According to Giani Gian Singh, Ch. Phul who was son of Ch.Rup Chand belonged to the family tree belonging to the descendants of Jawand Rao. When Guru Har Rai visited Malwa in 1702 B.K., Ch. Kala, who was the brother of Ch. Rup Chand brought his two nephews, Phul and Sandali to the Guru. On the instruction of their uncle, who was acting as the guardian, Ch.Phul and his brother Ch. Sandali started beating their bellies and when the Guru asked the reason, Ch. Kala explained that his nephews wanted to satiate their hunger. At that time, the Guru blessed and ordained that the Phul family would reign for a considerable period of time and that it would feed lacs of people. Ch Phul died after 1745 B K. and he was succeeded by his two sons : Talok Chand and Ram Chand, who were baptised by Guru Gobind Singh in the neighbourhood of 1761 B.K. and they were renamed as Talok Singh and Ram Singh. Because of the great services to the Guru, the two brothers were blessed and the Guru ordained "My house is your house and I am much pleased with you." (See the Tawarikh Raj Khalsa p.10)

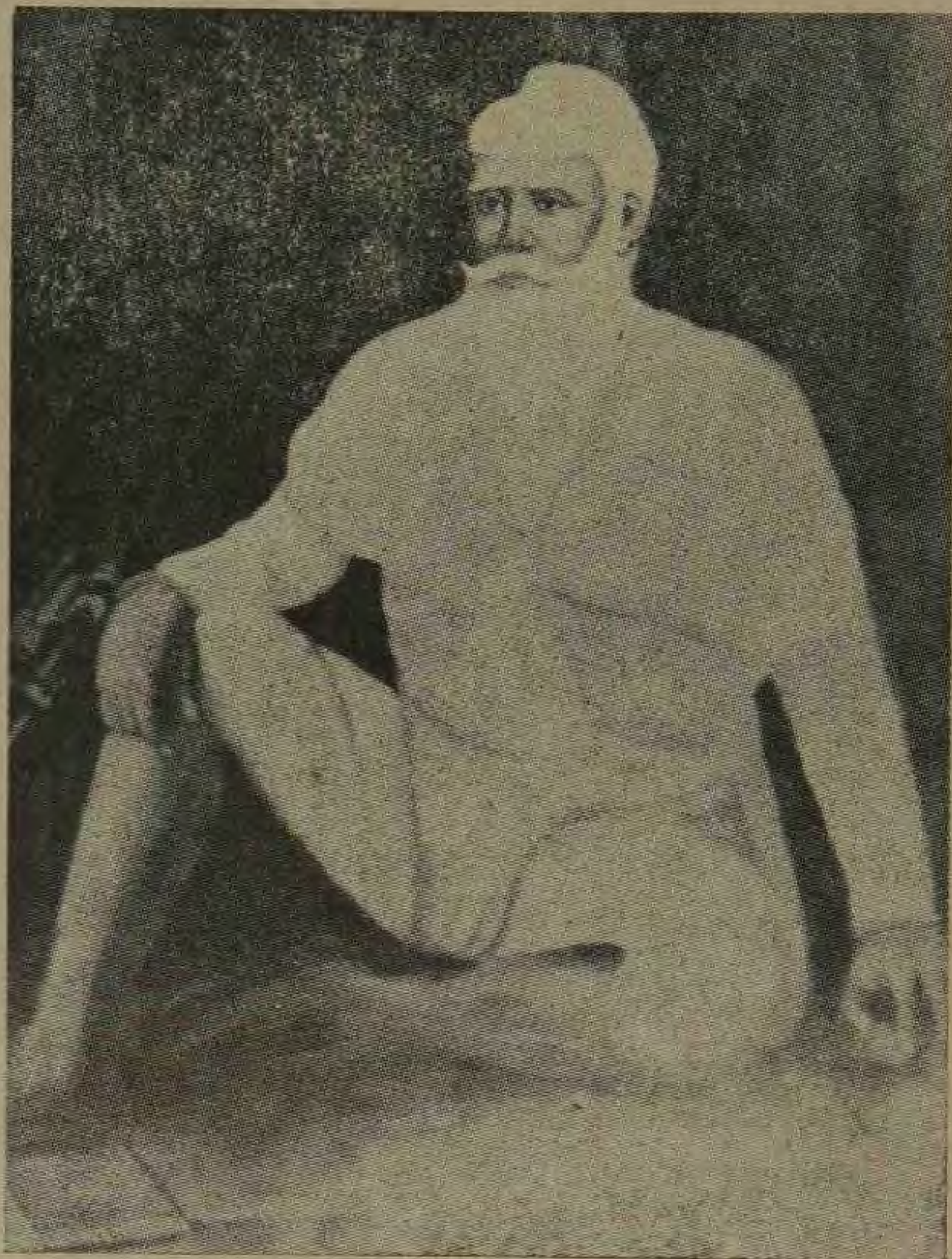
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1 Mr. Landen Sarasfield in his book "Betrayal of the Sikhs" writes: "The tale of Sidhu, first true member of the jat family to which the Maharaja of Patiala belongs, bears some similarity to that of Moses, the story of whose sojourn in the bulrushes we all know, Sidhu's father, who was in reality a Rajput, first married a girl of his own tribe, who, however, did not bear him any children and consequently he took to wife a Jatni, daughter of one Basir of Neli.. Sidhu, who according to Rajput custom, took the caste of his mother, appears to have four sons, and these in turn of course had many descendants."

Maharaja Ram Singh who was in the effective control over the areas surrounding Patiala and who was murdered in 1771 B K. (1714 A.D.) at the hands of Chain Singh, Uggar Sain and Biru, was succeeded by six sons, the names of whom find place in the pedigree table. Out of the six sons, Baba Ala Singh proved to be the most dominating and promising and in Samvat 1789 B.K. he was baptised by Nawab Kapur Singh.

The Patiala family attained its importance during the time of Baba Ala Singh, who founded the State of Patiala by defeating the neighbouring chieftons. Emperor Mohhammed Shah conferred the title "Raja" on Baba Ala Singh. After he took the administration of Patiala State, the first thing Raja Ala Singh did was to kill the murderers of his father.

In Samvat 1822 B. K., i.e. on August 13,1765A D.* Raja Ala Singh died and his grandson succeeded because all the three sons including Yuvraj Sardul Singh died during the lifetime of their father, Raja Ala Singh.



Baba Ala Singh
Reigned : 1691—1765
*Died : 7.8.1765***

Maharaja Amar Singh sat on the throne when he was 13 years old. Ahmed Shah Abdali conferred the title of Raja-i-Rajgan Bahadur and he also directed Raja Jessa Singh of Kapurthala vide *firman* dated 22 Ramjan, 1174 H to give obdedience to Raja Amar Singh.***

After the death of Maharaja Amar Singh at the age of 35 years, his 7 years old minor son, Maharaja Sahib Singh, stepped into his shoes. Sardarni Hukaman who was the grandmother of Maharaja Sahib Singh, entrusted the administration to Diwan Nanu Mal who discharged his

*See Tawarikh Raj Khalsa. **However, Maharaja's records show his death on 7.8.1765.
***See the museum at the Kapurthala Fort.

responsibilities in the best possible way. Maharaja Sahib Singh established political relations with the British Government, which nervous of the growing power of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and desirous of limiting his authority to the Sutluj entered into an agreement with the State of Patiala in 1809 A.D. and took the territory of the ruler on the eastern side of Sutluj under its protection. During his regime, one of his four wives, Maharani Ass Kaur, played a very prominent role in the administration of the



↑
(Maharaja Amar Singh, the grandson of Maharaja Ala Singh

Born : 6.6.1748
Reigned : 1765-1782
(Died : 5.2.1782)



←

Maharaja Sahib Singh
Born : 18.8 1773,
Reigned : 1782-1813.
Died : 26.3.1813

Patiala State. Maharaja Sahib Singh died on March 26,1813, and was succeeded by Maharaja Karam Singh who was at that time 15 years old. He helped the British in the conflict with the Gorkhas and, as a reward, he was gifted with 16

parganas in Simla Hills. After the death of Maharaja Karam Singh, Maharaja Narinder Singh succeeded his father at the age of 23 years. The services rendered by Maharaja Narinder Singh son of Maharaja Karam Singh to the British in the year 1857 are well-known to need recapitulation. In recognition to the services so rendered, the British Government ceded the Pargana of Narnaul to Patiala State and the rights of perpetual sovereignty were also conferred relating to Kanaud and Taluqa of Khamanon. Principal Teja Singh in his book :







Maharaja Karam Singh
Born : 12.10.1797
Reigned : 1813-1845.
Died : 23.12.1845.



Maharaja Narinder Singh
Born : 26.11 1824.
Reigned : 1845-1862.
Died ; 13.11.1862.

"The Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening" referred to the incident when Akali Kehar Singh reprimanded Maharaja Narinder Singh in 1859. S. Kehar Singh refused to see the Maharaja who had visited Anandpur Sahib and ordered him first

to go to Kesgarh Sahib and get pardon for his failings which the Maharaja did and he was baptised after he had confessed and doen penance.

Maharaja Mohinder Singh succeeded to the throne after the death of Maharaja Narinder Singh and he was deeply interested in the public works. Out of all the Maharajas, right from Maharaja Ala Singh to Maharaja Yadavindra Singh, Maharaja Mohinder Singh was the tallest with 6′—7″ as the height. Maharaja Rajinder Singh had two marriages: his first marriage was with an English lady, Maharani Florence hailing from England, while the second marriage was with Maharani Jasmer Kaur of Chakerian. Out of all the Maharajas, Maharaja Rajinder Singh's height was the shortest with 5′—7″. Out of the wedlock between Maharaja Rajinder Singh and Maharani Florence, a son was born but the same was not accepted to be the heir-apparent and he was poisoned to death by the chieftons of the Patiala State, as they apprehended that the heir-apparent would embrace Christianity under the influence of his mother.



Maharaja Mohinder Singh
Born : 16.9.1852.
Reigned : 1862-1876.
Died : 12.4.1876.

Maharani Florence felt heart-broken and she left Patiala for England, and that too for good. Maharani Jasmer Kaur gave birth to Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, who at the time of his father's death was a minor and during his minority, the State was administered by a Council of Regency. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh* also did not get the

*Maharaja Yadvindra Singh always mentioned and wrote about his father as Bhupindra Singh, while the records show that Maharaja Bhupinder Singh always signed as Bhupinder Singh.



Maharaja Rajinder Singh

Born : 25.5.1872
Reigned : 1876-1900
Died : 8-11-1900

mother's affection because he was separated from Maharani Jasmer Kaur as she had tuberculosis. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh was brought up under the guidance and supervision of his uncle, Raja Ranbir Singh, and Col. Sells. In 1903, when the Coronation Durbar was held at Delhi, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh was twelve years old and by personally leading his troops at the Grand Review, he tremendously impressed the people at the Durbar, who felt dumbfounded because of his towering and magnetic personality.

Diwan Jarmani Dass in his interesting book "Maharaja" explains at length the diversified personality of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, who was "a man of versatile ability and collected around him most eminent Ministers and officials. The ablest Statesmen were chosen as Ministers from all parts of India and they were greatly devoted to him throughout his life. Sirdar K. M. Panikkar, Free India's distinguished Ambassador to China, Egypt and France, was his trusted Foreign Minister. Colonel Raghbir Singh, former Chief Minister of Pepsu Government, was also a member of Patiala Government Cabinet, incharge of the portfolio of Home Affairs, Nawab Liaquat Hyat Khan was the Prime Minister of Patiala State for many years. The portfolio of law was in the hands of an able and distinguished lawyer from Allahabad, Mr. M. N. Raina...... Maharaja Bhupinder Singh's father, Maharaja Sir Rajinder Singh GCSI, died at an early age of 28 years being addicted to alcohol, and his advisers were very careful that Maharaja Bhupinder Singh should not become an addict to alcohol in the same way as were his father and

grandfather. He was brought up by an English tutor. Hindu and Sikh tutors also attended on him and at the age of 18 he was a versatile man...... His Highness Maharaja Sir Bhupinder Singh, Ruler of Patiala State, was well versed in philosophy and Vedanta, politics, the teachings of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Budhism and so on. Philosophers, scientists, poets, religious leaders, politicians and leaders of various other societies and institutions used to crowd into the palace. . When he died he had about 332 women in



↑
Maharaja Bhupinder Singh at the age of 6 years

his harem. Out of them there were only ten who were recognised as Maharanis while about fifty of them were called Ranis and the others were only mistresses and servants. All of them were at the beck and call of the Maharaja. Because of the voluptuous life of the harem and the political troubles which he



←

Maharaja Bhupinder Singh
Born : 12.10 1891
Reigned : 1900-1938
Died : 23.3 1938.

had with the neighbouring States and the Viceroy of India, the Maharaja fell ill and got high blood pressure. The famous physicians of France, Professor Abrami and Dr. Andre Lichtwitz, who had discovered a now method of bringing down blood pressure by giving special injections in the spinal chord, were sent for from France."

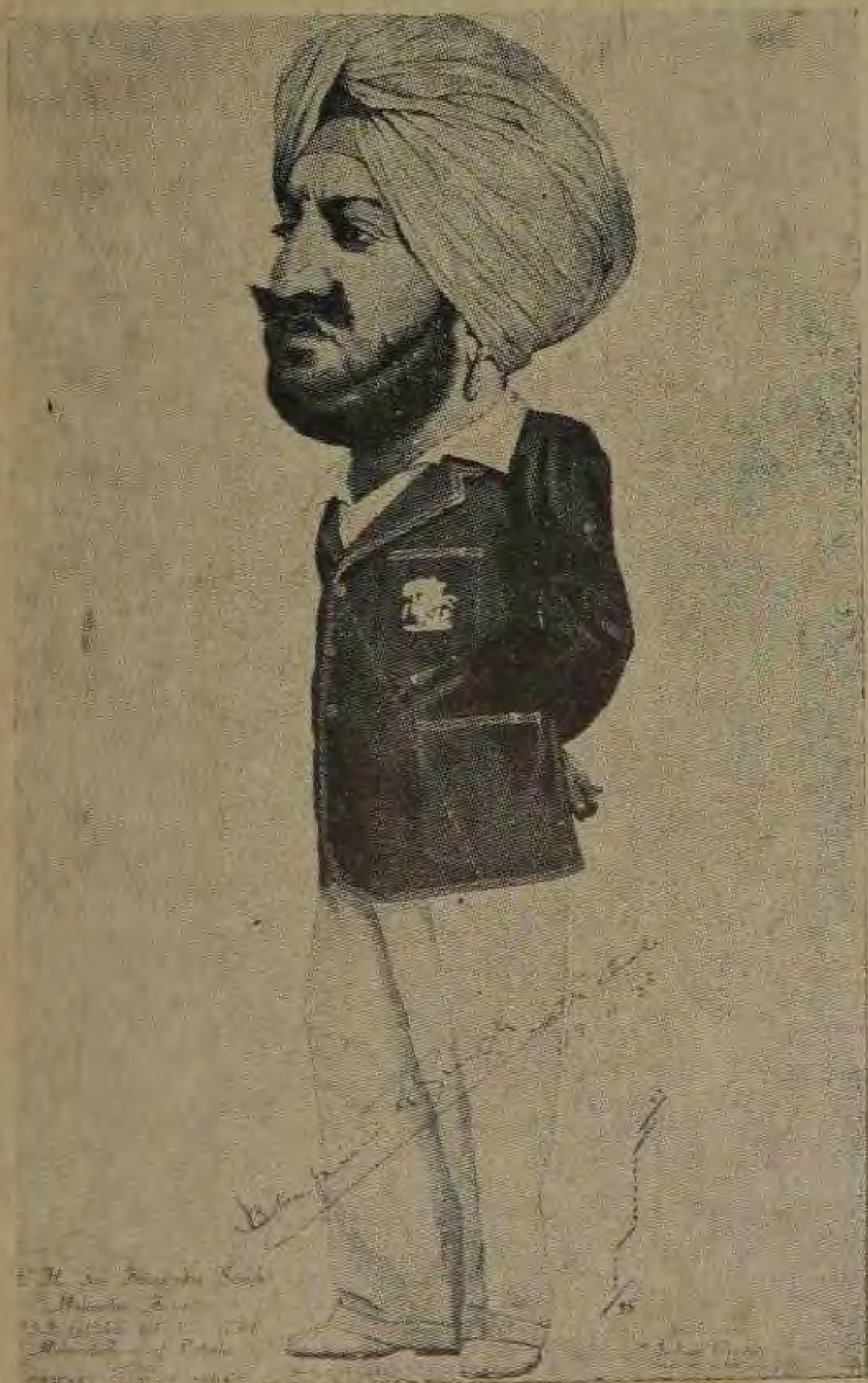
S. Gian Singh Rarewala fully supported the version given by the Diwan so far the last days of the Maharaja were concerned. Because of the injections, the Maharaja became blind



↑

Maharaja Bhupinder Singh and Yuvraj Yadvindra Singh

but only a few people knew about it. "As usual he used to call his favourite and beloved attendant, Sardar Mehar Singh Bila, to tie his beard and turban and he used



←

"The M.C.C. England presented the above cartoon to His Highness Sir Bhupinder Singh, the President of the Board of Cricket Control of India on 19-11-1935. The Maharaja gifted it away to S Gurmukh Singh Ahluwalia as a token of love and affection, the latter had for him."

used to sit before the mirror in the same way as he used to do before in order to show the women and men around him that he was not blind. The servants used to put *surma* to blacken his eyes in the same way as he used to do every day. The Maharaja used to dress in white silk sherwani and baggy trousers of the type of a salwar which usually men in Kashmir valley wore. After having been properly dressed he invited women to come and see him and talk to him in the same way as before. They had never noticed that the Maharaja had become blind."*

Dr. Panikar, in his autobiography, just released, refers to the Maharaja with the words : "Maharaja Bhupinder Singh was a veritable Duryadhana among princes. A huge figure of a man, handsome and commanding in presence, he was an admirable example of Punjabi manhood six-foot in height, toughened by exercise, and elaborately arranged beard,a dignified but pleasant face, ever glittering with determination, such was his outward appearance. The divided and twisted beard gave his face the semblance of a *kathakali* make-up. Once an European told me at a Princes' Chamber gathering that besides him other Maharajas look like rustics. Such was his regal presence...At one time he used to consume a normal meal with others and then sit down by himself to consume a whole roast lamb. One evening



At the time of coronation in 1938. Lt. Gen. His Highness Farzand-i-khas, Daulat-i-Inglisha, Mansur-i-Zaman, Amir-ul-Umra, Maharajdhiraj Raj Rajeshwar, Sri Maharaja-i-Rajgan, Sir Yadvindra Singh ji Mohinder Bahadur, GCIE, GCVO, GBE, LLD, etc; is seen with his Cabinet Ministers, Generals and A.D.C s (Taken from the personal file of S. Gurmukh Singh Ahluwalia)

* See J. Dass's book 'Maharaja'

I was astounded to see him eat 25 quails casually one after another in the same way as we munch banana wafers. On the day of his death, his attenuated diet consisted of an omellete of ten eggs."

Maharaja Bhupinder Singh was the symbolic representation of profound confidence mingled with examplary boldness, friendliness and generosity. He was a very good friend but also a bad foe. People are unanimous that had Maharaja Bhupinder Singh been alive at the time of the integration of the States, the history of Punjab would have been entirely different as he had the terrific and colossal propensity to shape the things according to his own will and choice. He was gifted with almost all the qualities, a leader must necessarily possess and that was the reason that on his death, over one million subjects of the State and people from the surrounding States gathered to pay their tributes to the Maharaja, so near and dear to them.

After the death of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, his son Maharaja Yadvindra Singh became the Maharaja of Patiala and he had been reigning the State of Patiala from 1938 to 1948, when the integration took



"The Maharaja Yadvindra Singh was a Prince who possessed the common touch. He felt at home everywhere and with all people. It also fell to his lot to change gear in mid-life. He did so with dignity, grace, style, a minimum of bitterness and in a public spirited manner." The Maharaja is seen with the family members of S. Gurmukh Singh at the time of the inauguration of Romeo Industries, Chandigarh, on October 24, 1971.

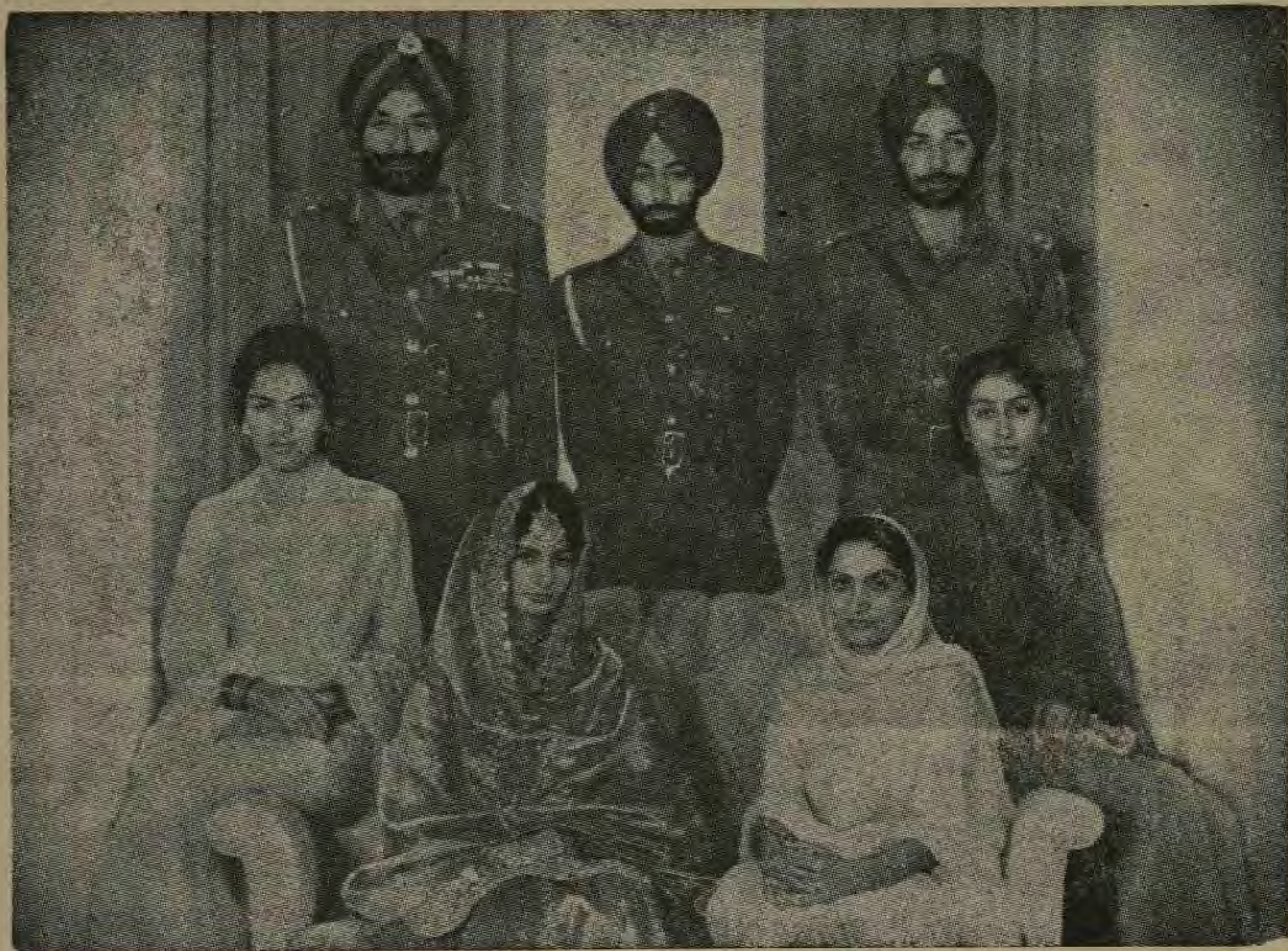
place. Maharaja Patiala won the heart of S. Patel and his contribution in persuading the rulers in question to join the Indian Union was magnificent and tremendous. The Maharaja carried the rank of Lieutenant General in the British Army, while he was the honorary Colonel of 15th Sikhs. He was conferred the degree of Doctorate of Laws by the Punjab University. In addition to other decorations, he was G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G. C. V. O., G. B. E., and honorary A. D. C. to His Majesty. Maharaja Patiala occupied very important positions and offices and he was also elected as a member to the Punjab Vidhan Sabha. He died on June 17, 1974, at the age of 61 years in Holland, where he was posted as the Indian Ambassador, leaving behind his widow, Maharani Mohinder Kaur of Patiala, Maharaja Amar Inder Singh, Raja Malvinder Singh, the sons, and (Kanwarani) Natwar Singh and Sardarni Rupinder Kumari as his daughters. The role played by the Maharaja during the partition days in the resettlement of the refugees from Pakistan was highly applauded and appreciated.



The greatest service of the Ruling Family of Faridkot has been to provide commentry and exegesis to Granth Sahib and to provide electricity at Sri Harmandir Sahib. The picture relates to the last Vice Regal Party at Simla in 1948, with Lord Mountbatten as the host.

L to R : Rani Joginder Pal Kaur of Arnauli H. H. Raja Harinder Singh of Faridkot; Her Highness of Faridkot; Sardarni Subhsher Kaur of Shahzadpur; Sardarni Ripjeet Singh, Kanwrani of Kapurthala; Kanwar Manjit Inder Singh and Kanwrani Jagdish Kaur, who, as an M.L.A., always opened and closed her address in the Pb. Assembly with

The members of the Patiala family are highly friendly, hospitable and remarkably sophisticated, and, in all fairness to the Maharani and the Maharaja, it will have to be conceded that they lived in the realm of realism and reconciled themselves to the changed and ostensibly adverse circumstances very gracefully and threw their lot with the common people. Perhaps, they could ill-afford to forget that "there was no good in arguing with the inevitable and the only argument available with an east wind was to put on your over-coat."



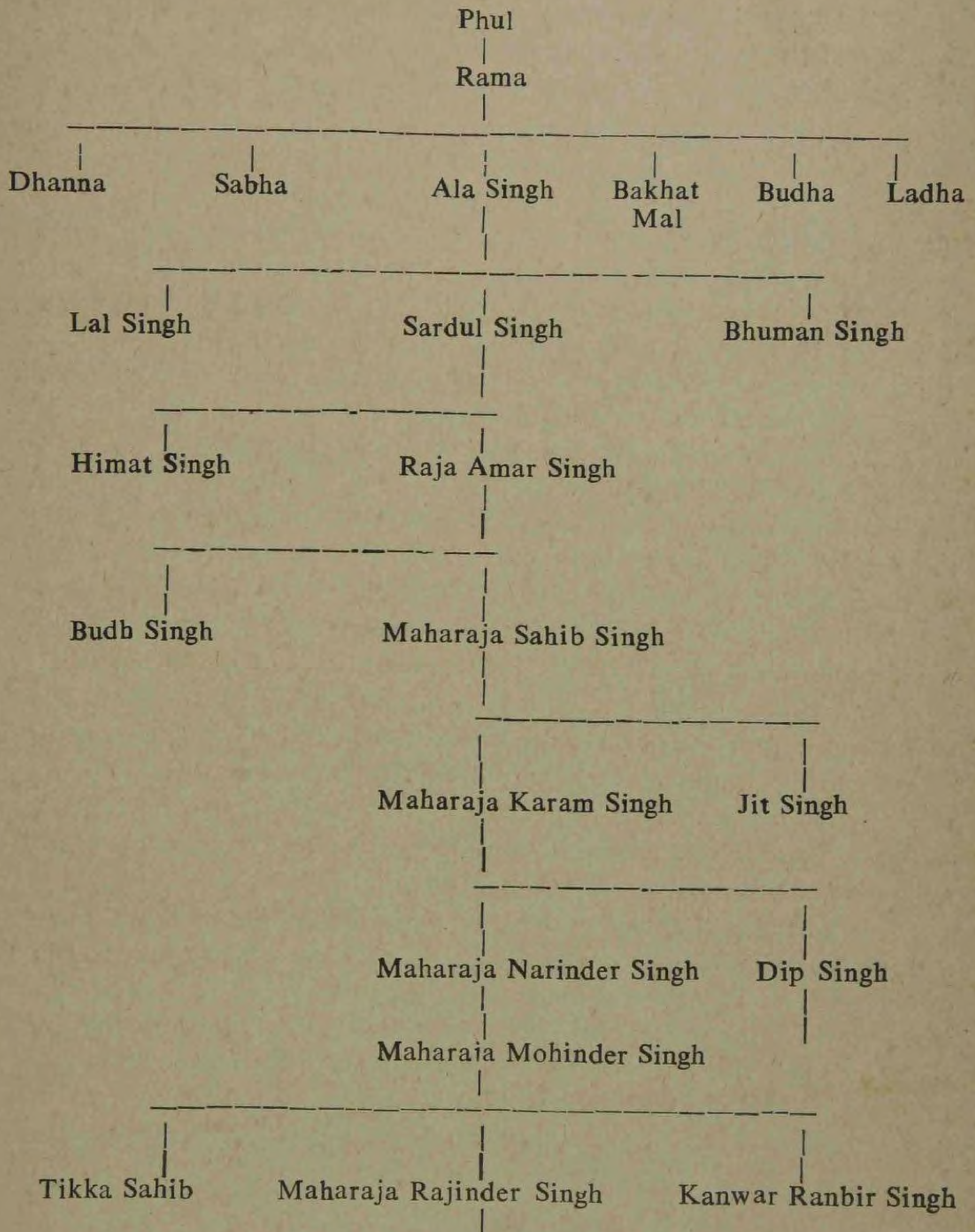
Standing : *L to R Maharaja Patiala, (Maharaja) Amar Inder Singh, (Raja) Malvinder Singh.*

Sitting : *L to R (Kanwrani) Natwar Singh; (Marharani) Preneet Kaur; Maharani Patiala; and Princess Rupinder Kumari. The photograph relates to the wedding of (Maharaja) Amar Inder Singh with (Maharani) Preneet Kaur, daughter of S. Gyan Singh Kahlon.*

When I visited the new Moti Bagh Palace and learnt the way, the Maharajas were living, the words of Bhartorihari's Vairagya Satakam burnt themselves deep into my memory:

"Alas, my Brother ! Mighty kings and Lords, Proud, princes, courtiers, loveliest maidens gay
Bards, and their tales of ancient chivalry
Homage to time ! all these have passed away".

PEDIGREE TABLE OF THE PATIALA FAMILY.*



Maharaja Bhupinder Singh
(Father of Maharaja Yadvindra Singh and grand-father of (Maharaja) Amar Inder Singh and (Raja) Malwinder Singh)

*Also see Tawarikh Raj Khalsa.

The Ministry in PEPSU could not be formed

On 14.7.1948, Sardar Patel, Deputy Prime Minister, accompanied by Mr V. P. Menon, arrived at Patiala, so that he could inaugurate PEPSU on the 15th July. Maharaja Patiala had gone to the railway station to receive Sardar Patel, and he himself drove the car from the railway station to the Qilla Mubarak. It was, indeed, a very interesting incident at the railway station when the Maharaja introduced minor ruler of Kalsia State to Sardar Patel. Immediately after they reached Patiala, an effort was made for the formation of the ministry, and it proved to be a job riddled with lot of difficulties because the differences between the Parjamandal and the Akali Dal could not be reconciled, therefore, an endeavour was made to form a composite ministry in which Parjamandal, (Congress Party in the States was generally addressed as Parjamandal) Akali Dal and Lok Sewak Sabha (patronised by S. Udham Singh Nagoke) were to be represented as those were the only three parties to be reckoned with. The formula, which Mr. Menon offered to the above parties to start with, was to offer 4 seats for Parjamandal, 2 seats for Akali Dal and 2 for Lok Sewak Sabha with a neutral Sikh to be nominated by Sardar Patel as Premier. Mr. Menon wrote in his book 'The Story of the Integration of Indian States' that "The first of the parties to decline to join was the Akali Dal which, apart from the question of its relative representation, declined to give an undertaking that its representatives would eschew communal policies if they were invited to join the government. This was a clear repudiation of its earlier assurance that its representatives would be prepared to act on non-communal lines.

An effort was then made to form a government out of the Congress and the Lok Sewak Sabha, the former being now offered four seats in a cabinet of seven which was to include a neutral Premier. Because of the with-drawal of the Akali Dal, the Lok Sewak Sabha asked for increased representation, but this was not agreed to. The principal hurdle proved to be the selection of the Premier. Out of several names that were considered, the Lok Sewak Sabha supported that of Sardar Gyan Singh Rarewala, who was at that time in the service of Patiala State. The Congress representatives also considered him suitable; but after having agreed, they subsequently declined to accept him because he happened to be an official—a fact which was known to them before. The Congress representatives overplayed their hand. They felt that if they stuck to their guns they would get what they demanded, which was that the formation of the ministry should be entrusted solely to the leader of the local Prajamandal. This led to the breakdown of the negotiations.

Early next morning I reported to Sardar the failure of my efforts The only course left was to inaugurate the Union by swearing in the Rajpramukh. This was done formally by Sardar that day."

PEPSU Inaugurated.

On July 15, 1948, PEPSU was inaugurated, and Sardar Patel called this occasion as a landmark in the history of India's progress. The area of PEPSU was to be 10,000 square miles, while its population was 34,24,060, and its annual budget was to be a little more than 5 crores. The Maharaja Patiala and Kapurthala were to be the first Rajpramukh and Uprajpramukh respectively.

Sardar Patel administered the oath to the Maharaja of Patiala, who administered the oath to Maharaja Kapurthala swearing allegiance to the Centre and the Union and promising to do justice to all people in accordance with the laws and usages of the Country without fear, favour or ill-will. Obviously, no announcement of the ministry was made. Dr. Bhargava, Sardars Swaran Singh, Baldev Singh, Ishar Singh Majhail, and Mr. V.P. Menon were some of the distinguished persons, who participated in the inauguration. The Jagirdars and the family members of the Maharaja were also present, while the members of Akali Dal and Praja Mandal were conspicuous by their absence.

Care-taker Ministry with Sardar Gian Singh Rarewala as the head formed.



(S. Rarewala)
(See 'Panj Kaunsili' for bio-data.)

Another effort was made in August, 1948, to form a Ministry but it failed. However, an official caretaker Government was set up with S. Gian Singh Rarewala as the Premier but this was to be only a stop-gap arrangement. The attitude of the Akali Dal towards that political set-up was reflected in the following resolution which was passed by the working Committee, which held its meeting on 25. 7. 1948, under the presidentship of Master Tara Singh :—

"(a) Whareas it is admitted that the Sikhs constitute an effective

majority in the Patiala and East Punjab States Union, the Shiromani Akali Dal is, therefore, of the considered view that it is Shiromani Riyasti Akali Dal which alone represents the voice of the Sikhs, that should and could be called to form the ministry with the co-operation of the other parties ;

(b) Keeping in view the recent development in the Union, the Shiromini Akali Dal is of the considered opinion that the tangle created is at the instigation of the States Ministry, and the Maharaja. Under the circumstances, a Ministry cannot be formed to the satisfaction of Riyasti Shiromani Akali Dal. An impartial and genuine Sikh administrator should be appointed for the interim period till the elections are held ;

(c) Shiromani Akali Dal repeats its oft-declared policy that it stands for peace, tranquillity and co-operation with other elements in the country. Despite this, if efforts are made to bring in minority community's ruler through the Sikh hirelings in the Union, the Shiromani Akali Dal will be constrained to think of other steps to meet this menace."

On August 22, 1948, S. Rarewala was given the oath as the Prime Minister of the Care-taker Ministry in the Union. His Highness administered the oath of secrecy before a distinguished gathering of officials.

Akali Dal's Resolve to Fight Against Congress.

On August 25, 1948, while making a speech at Amritsar, Master ji addressed the Congress as an organisation of reactionaries and the differences between the Congress and the Akali Dal assumed a new dimension when he announced five demands which were to be the basis of Akali Dal's struggle against the Congress Organisation ; (1) Recruitment of the Sikhs to the Indian Army ; (2) Formation of Punjabi speaking Province; (3) Safeguarding of Sikh rights in Pepsu ; (4) Introduction of Punjabi as Court language and its adoption as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges; and (5) Giving of land and property to the refugees according to what they possessed in west Pakistan.

On 7. 9. 1948, Master Ji called upon S. Pritam Singh Gojran, President of Riyasti Akali Dal, to begin and back struggle against the injustice by the Government of India for appointing a Care-taker Govt. in Pepsu, and on 10/9, a very big conference was held at Patiala, where it

was stated that Civil Dis-obedience movement was to be started. S. Gojran stated that 'Patels' and 'Menons' were not to be permitted to rule them and he lamented that almost a Hindu Raj was established.

While speaking in the above conference, Master Ji stated that Maharaja Patiala could not be the leader of Sikhs so long he remained the henchman of the Central Government because the Panthak Darbar, of which the Maharaja was the head, was the creation of the Central Government.

A BROAD-BASED MINISTRY CONSTITUTED WITH RAREWALA AS THE HEAD.

On January 13, 1949, a broad-based Ministry with S. Gian Singh Rarewala as the head was constituted to conduct the administration of Pepsu and it comprised S. Gian Singh Rarewala, Col. Raghbir Singh, Giani Zail Singh, Ch. Nihal Singh Takshak, Pt. Ram Nath, Mr. Lachhman Dass Advocate, S. Ajit Singh of Rampura Phul and S. Harcharan Singh Advocate of Bhatinda. That 8-man Ministry was sworn in on January 20, when the Care-taker Govt. stood dissolved. Shri Brish Bhan, the then Congress Chief opposed it and so did the Akalis. However, S. Kairon supported it and appreciated the role of Maharaja Patiala during the partition of the country.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TAKES OVER ADMINISTRATION IN PEPSU.

On November 18, 1949, the Pepsu broad-based Ministry stood dissolved and the Govt. of India took over the administration. When I interviewed Mr. Brish Bhan and asked the reasons as to why the administration was taken over by the Govt. of India, he assigned three reasons: (1) false implication of the innocent people in the two cases known as Malerkotla Rape Case and the Kishan Garh Case in which there was a pitched battle between the land-lords and the tenants ; (2) the secret enquiry got conducted by S. Patel through the Defence Secretary, Mr. Veloddy, who submitted an adverse report against the Govt. ; and (3) complete absence of law and order as well as the general discontentment all-around in the State. According to Mr. Brish Bhan, S. Patel was contacted to whom the injustice and repression let loose on the people was spot-lighted and the Sardar stood convinced about the correctness of the allegations and the charges, levelled against the Ministry through the Defence Secretary's confidential enquiry report. However, Sardar wanted Mr. Brish Bhan and his group to co-operate with S. Gian Singh Rarewala and Mr. M. R. Bhide, who were to be appointed as the Chief Secretary

and the Chief Administrator respectively, and that was how the States Ministry of Govt. of India took over the administration in Pepsu.

On 28.11.1949, the Akali Dal's Working Committee opposed the dissolution of the Ministry which had come into existence about 10 months earlier.

Akali Agitation about the Replacement of the Patiala Ruler's Flag.

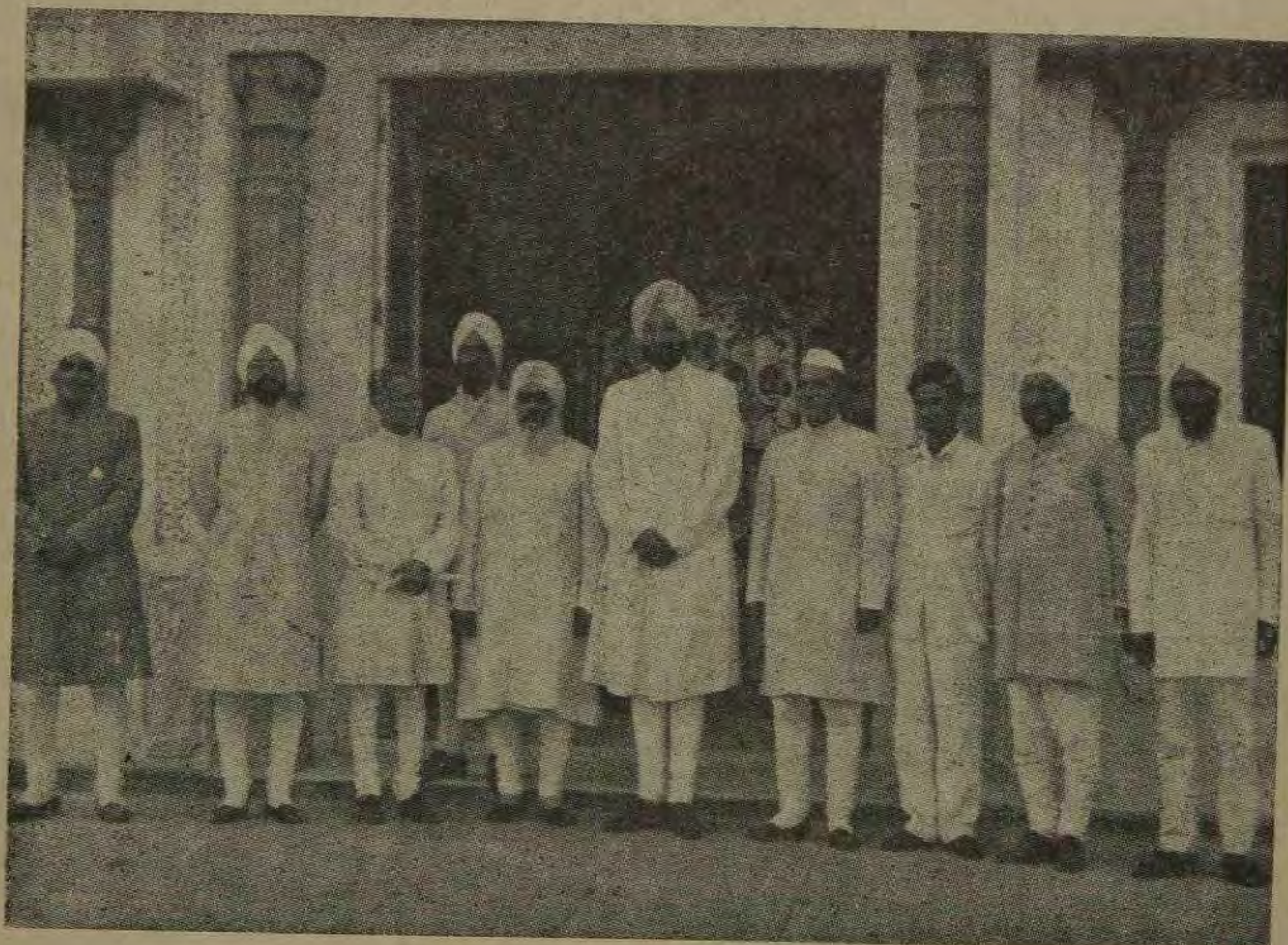
On January 26, 1950, the Patiala Ruler's flag was replaced by the flag of the Raj Parmukh on the Patiala Fort and the Akali Dal started an agitation against the above replacement. S. Rarewala succeeded in tackling it by his statement made at Moga on February 13, 1949, to the effect that ".. it was Ahmed Shah Durani who in 1769 not only bestowed upon Raja Amar Singh of Patiala the title of Raja-i-Rajgan, but also presented him with a flag as an emblem of rulership. In 1864, the Persian inscription of the flag was replaced by the motto 'Heaven's light our guide'. After over 85 years in 1944 A. D., the well-known words of Guru Gobind Singh 'Tera Ghar Mera Aseh' were introduced. Before the merger of the Republic, the Govt. of India called a conference of Raj Parmukhs of the State Unions and it was decided that a uniform flag should fly on all the official residences of all the Provincial Governments and the Raj Parmukhs, thereafter Raj Parmukh's flag was hoisted on the fort on 26-1-1950, therefore, it is a false and frivolous agitation."

SIKH MAHA SAMAGAM

On September 1, 1951, the Sikh Maha *Samagam* opened at Patiala, when 2 lakh Sikhs joind 1-mile long procession. That *Samagam* was organised for the purification and moral rearmament of the Sikhs. Master Tara Singh was the President-elect, while S. Gurbachan Singh Kalsia was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. Bir Khalsa Dal, Istri Dal, and Singh Sabhas participated and thousands of Sikhs were administered baptism. There was so much rush of the Sikhs that by evening of September 1, more than 1500 maunds of wheat stood consumed for the meals of the devotees. When an appeal was made for the collection of the funds so that station-wagons as well as a printing press could be purchased for preaching the Sikh religion, Sant Jawala Singh of village Harkhowal silently left the *Samagam*, however, he was prevailed upon by the organisers to address the gathering. Sant Ji uttered only two sentences and then retired. His speech was :—"When Guru Nanak started his mission, did he have a station-wagon or a printing press? Make your life illustrious and exemplary so that the men in the street could emulate."

Interim Ministry In Pepsu With Col. As The Head Formed.

On May 23, 1951, 7-man Ministry was Sworn in by the Raj Parmukh and it consisted of Sarvshri Raghbir Singh (Col.), Brish Bhan, Zail Singh (Giani), Nihal Singh Takshak, Des Raj Gupta, Tirath Singh and Sampuran Singh, who were the Cabinet Ministers, while S Harchand Singh and Mr. Roshan Lal were the two Deputy Ministers.



(Shown from L. to R.) Sarvshri Roshan Lal, Zail Singh, Brish Bhan Sampuran Singh, Col. Raghbir Singh, Raj Parmukh, Nihal Singh Takshak, Des Raj, Tirath Singh and Harchand Singh.

1952-PEPSU ELECTIONS. Jan 7-1952

On January 7, 1952, Pepsu went to polls at 9.00 A.M, for electing 60 members to the Pepsu State Assembly. One Member from Kandaghat constituency stood already elected unopposed. The elections were completed on February 10, 1952, and the party-wise results of the election were as under :—

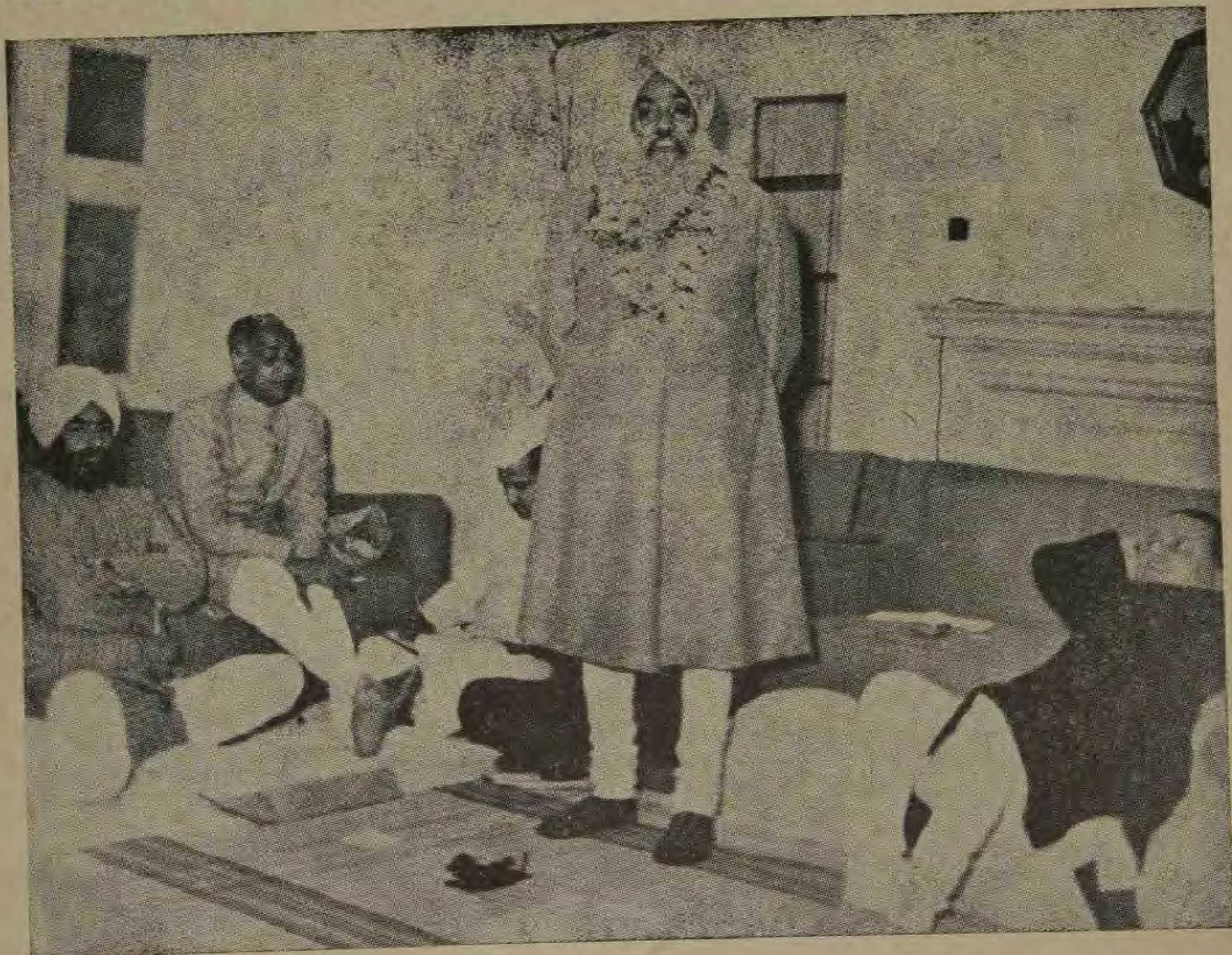
Congress	26	Akali	19
Independents	7	Jan Sangh	3
Communists	3	K. M. P. P.	1
S. C. Federation	1	Total	60

The interesting part of the election was that Mr. Brish Bhan defeated S. Pritam Singh Gojran, the Vice President of Shromani Akali Dal, while S. Gian Singh Rarewela was elected as an independent candidate, of course, with the support of the Akali Dal. S. Joginder Singh Mann stood defeated at the hands of S. Balwant Singh Chanarthal from Sirhind constituency while Kanwar Manjit Inder Singh, brother of Maharaja of Faridkot, defeated Giani Zail Singh from Kot Kapura-Jaito double-member constituency. Sarvshri Hukam Singh and Ajit Singh Bhatinda were elected as Members of Parliament out of Pepsu. Scheduled Castes Federation and the Depressed Classes League led by Shri P. S. Azad had a complete eclipse.

CONGRESS MINISTRY HEADED BY COL. RAGHBIR SINGH FORMED.

On March 1,1952, Col. Raghbir Singh was unanimously elected as the Leader of the Congress Assembly Party.

On March 19, the Congress Ministry was administered the oath by the Raj Parmukh in the Library Hall, Moti Bagh Palace, Patiala, and the Ministry consisted of Col. Raghbir Singh, as the Chief Minister, Sarvshri Brish Bhan, Tirath Singh, Nihal Singh Takshak and Fateh Singh Malvai



Col. Raghbir Singh with Giani Zail Singh, Mr. Brish Bhan & Mr. D.K. Barua

as Ministers, while Ch. Inder Singh Malik and Ch. Kahn Singh as well as S. Harcharan Singh were taken as the Deputy Ministers. In the swearing in ceremony, there was a delay because of the dispute relating to the allotment of portfolios. S. Rarewala, who was the Leader of the United Front Party, claimed majority, and when the pressmen asked S. Rarewala as to whether he had a bombshell in his pocket, he smiled.

COL. RAGHBIR SINGH.

Col. Raghbir Singh who, was born in V Thather Distt. Lahore, developed friendship with Maharaja Bhupinder Singh in the Chiefs College at Lahore, and on the latter's persuasion, the Col. joined the police service in Patiala as Superintendent of Police. Later on he was promoted to the post of Inspector General of Police. Col. Sahib and S. Rarewala were very close to the Maharaja of Patiala. Col. Raghbir Singh played a prominent role in getting the marriage of Maharani Sahiba of Patiala, Sardarni Mohinder Kaur, arranged with Maharaja Sahib of Patiala. S. Harchand Singh Jeji was the son-in-law of Col.'s real sister, Sardarni Avtar Kaur, while S. Jeji is the father of Maharani of Patiala.

Col. Raghbir Singh joined Congress in the year 1947, and he headed the Government in 1951, 52 and 54. After the partition, the Col. gave up his association with the Akali Dal and formed Lok Sewak Sabha, a secular Organisation to fight the State Praja Mandal. However, he dissolved his Organisation at the instance of Sardar Patel.



Sardarni Amarjit Kaur, M.P.

After a great difficulty, I was able to arrange an interview with Sardarni Amarjit Kaur M. P., a charming and an affectionate daughter of the Col. and it was, indeed, a pleasant experience to meet her and her amiable husband, Kanwar Devinder Singh. The good qualities of Col.'s head and heart were narrated but because of the shortage of space, it would not be possible to dwell at length. However,

it is undisputed that the Col. gave a very clean and efficient administration to the people of Pepsu. The Col. died on January 7, 1955, and his funeral procession, taken on the next day, was attended by more than 30,000 persons showing his popularity among the people.

NATURE OF POLITICS IN PEPSU.

Political activities in Pepsu centred around economic and social but certainly not on religious considerations. The problem of antagonistic relations between the landlords and tenants was so enormous that it almost defied a solution. The biggest absentee land-lordism in Pepsu made the struggle between "Haves" and "Haves Nots" more bitter and even violent. All important posts were exclusively reserved for a few families near and dear to the Maharaja, creating heart-burning in the people at large. The Kisan Conference held at Ludhiana in 1939 and addressed by Pt. Nehru lent a great support in boosting the morale of the down-trodden, who started uniting themselves under various well-knit Organisations obviously with pro-Communist leanings. After sometime, the tenants stopped paying the rent and landlords were not allowed even to visit their farms resulting in great tension and even chaos. Maharaja tried to placate the tenants by conferring some concessions but it proved to be a wild-goose chase as the bureaucracy was evidently pro-landlord. Raman group, out of the Akalis, and Praja Mandal veered around the down-trodden, while the Maharaja managed with the utmost political dexterity, to keep his house united, of course, with the active support of the Colonel and Sardar Rarewala as well as the feudal lords and aristocrats.



S. Harchand Singh Jeji

In Pepsu politics, the role played by Maharaja Patiala's father-in-law, S. Harchand Singh Jeji, can hardly be exaggerated. He has always been associated with the Akali Movement in the princely States. "After

the settlement of disputes over the gurdwaras, the Akalis from the states began to agitate against the autocratic misuse of power by the maharajahs, chiefly Bhupendra Singh of Patiala. Bhupendra Singh retaliated by having the leading agitator, Seva Singh Thikrivala, transferred from Lahore gaol and interned in Patiala on a palpably false charge of theft. The Akalis took up the case of Thikrivala and let loose a campaign publicising Bhupendra Singh's amorous escapades and the sadistic behaviour of his police. The Maharajah was able to win over a section of the Akalis, but could not silence the Punjabi and Urdu press. ......The pro-Patiala group was led by Gyani Sher Singh and Jaswant Singh Jhabal. They condemned the agitation against Bhupendra Singh as a *bhra maru jang*—murderous war against a brother...



(From left to right Maharani Mohinder Kaur, Mrs. Vijay Laxmi Pandit, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Maharani Jaipur and Maharani Gwalior).

In 1928 Akalis from the states joined with Hindu nationalists and founded the Praja Mandal (States People's Association); the mandal was later affiliated to the All India States People's Congress (in its turn associated with the Indian National Congress). Seva Singh Thikrivala was the moving spirit behind the Mandal. He was arrested several times and in 1935 succumbed to third degree methods practised on him by the Maharajah's gaolers. As a result of the murder of Thikrivala, the anti-Maharaja, anti-British movement gained momentum in all princely states of the Punjab."[2]

S. Jeji was quite intimate with Baba Kharak Singh, S. Thikrivala and Master Tara Singh and because of his affiliation with the Akali Dal, Maharaja Bhupender Singh exiled him from the Patiala State and his property was confiscated. Maharaja Yadavindra Singh was married to a princess of Sarai Killa State and the feudal lords as well as the family members of the Maharaja were naturally disinterested in getting their influence over the Maharaja loosened. Therefore, they, through the good offices of the Rajmata, succeeded in getting the marriage between Maharaja Yadavindra Singh and Maharani Mohinder Kaur solemnised. In the interview, when I asked S. Dara Singh, the top-most criminal lawyer of the Punjab & Haryana High Court and once a Minister in the Rarewala Ministry, as to whether it was a love or an arranged marriage, he called it a political one.

So far as the language problem was concerned "Pepsu was also linguistically divided for educational purposes. The Hindi speaking region consisted of the districts of Mahendragarh and Kohistan (including Chhachrauli tehsil minus Dera Bassi) and the tehsils of Jind and Narwana The rest of the State was declared to be the Punjabi zone. In one zone, Hindi in Devnagri script; in the other Punjabi in Gurmukhi script were made the media of instruction and in both the other language was made compulsory from the fourth primary class upwards. There was no provision for choice of the medium of instruction in the Punjab".[3] The Communists were deadly opposed to the Akali Dal, which, according to them, was exclusively controlled by the big land-lords and that was the reason that in 1954-elections, there was an alliance between Communists and the left wing Akalis led by S. Raman, who, according to Sardars Rarewala and B. S. Mann, had been working under the advice of S. Dara Singh, Advocate. Because of the conciliation of differences beween the Maharaja's & Jeji's families, Jeji's position and property stood restored and the future events would reveal the role of an intermediary, which S. Jeji was destined

to play between Master and the Maharaja. A meeting took place at the house and instance of S. Jeji where Master and the Maharaja reached the understanding relating to 1952-Elections and in its light, the Maharaja was to finance the elections, while the majority of the members seeking the Akali tickets were to be of Maharaja's choice. Throughout the lives of Master ji and Maharaja Patiala, S. Jeji succeeded in perpetuating the cordial relations between the two leaders. S. Jeji, a saintly and a God-fearing person, is held in a very high esteem among the Sikhs.



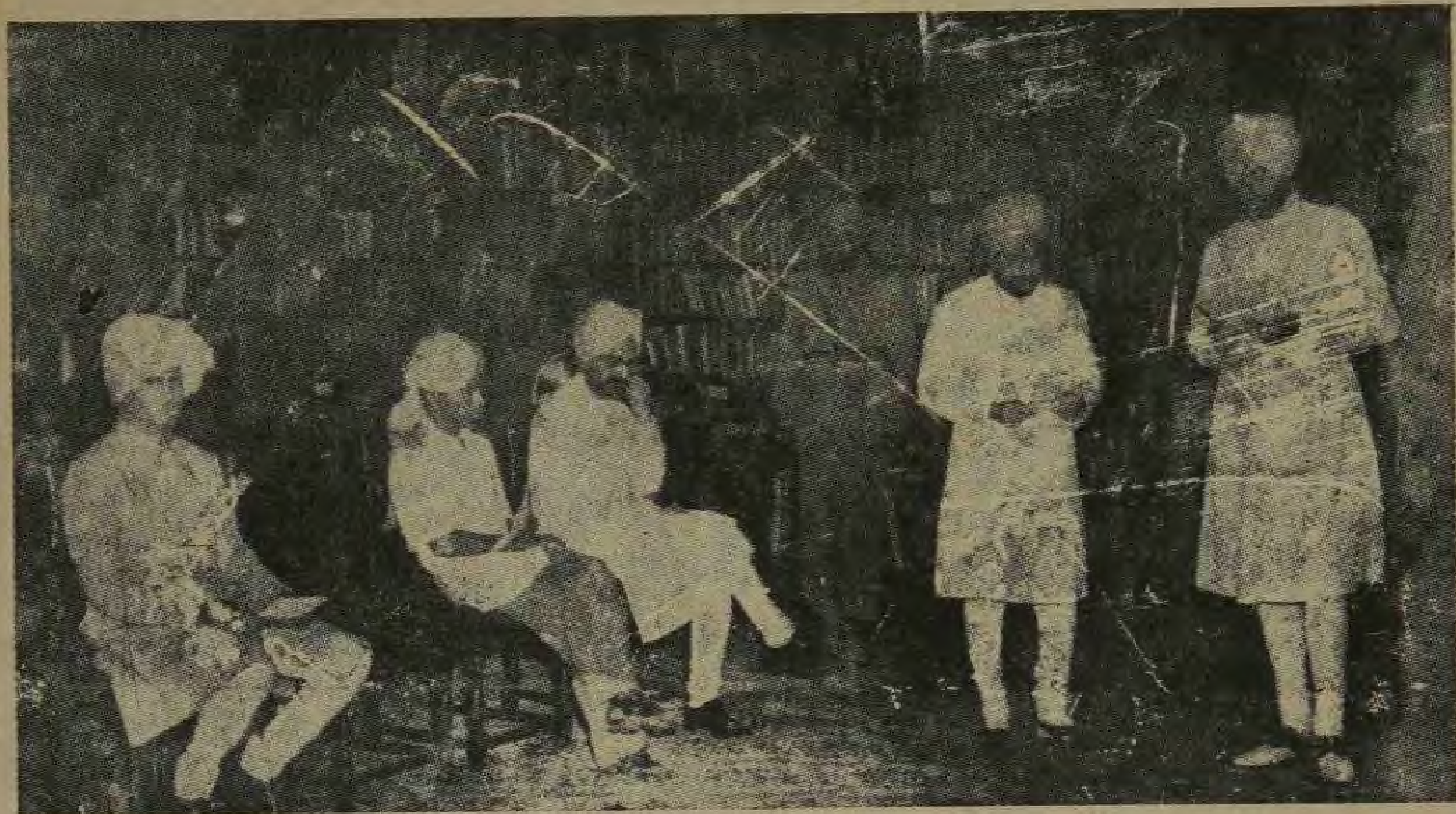
Sardarni Baljit Kaur, second daughter of S. Jeji, and a noted English poetess 'Random Thoughts' a book of English poetry written by her is well-known.

Non-Congress Ministry with Rarewala as the Head Formed in Pepsu.

On April 16, 1952, dramatic developments took place in Pepsu, when the Assembly opened with the Government's defeat. The crisis developed when Ch. Kahan Singh, who was taken as the Deputy Minister on March 19, 1952, at the time of the swearing in ceremony of the Congress Ministry, resigned to become the Speaker. Moreover, there were more and sudden defections from the Congress. Sarvshri Lekh Ram and Onkar Singh also left the Congress. The 1-month old Pepsu Congress Ministry resigned on April 18, 1952, when the Speaker sprang a surprise by crossing the floor. With the desertion of Ch. Fateh Singh from the Congress, the Colonel felt cast down and sorrowed ; and he wailed and cried that he could trust none except himself.

On April 22, 1952, the non-Congress Ministry with S. Gian Singh Rarewala as the head was formed in Pepsu. Ch. Ram Singh, S. Bhupinder Singh Mann and Ch. Attar Singh were the other Ministers. However, S. Dara Singh and Ch. Inder Singh as well as S. Mihan Singh Gill were

taken Ministers later on. With the resignation of Pt. Devkinandan, Deputy Minister, from the Rarewala Cabinet, the party position was : Congress 26, United Front-31, and Communists-3. The strength of the United Front Party was further reduced to 29, with the unseating of Ch. Ranjit Singh, a Scheduled Caste and an United Front M.L.A. and Thakur Lekh Ram, the Deputy Speaker. In November, 1952, a prominent Communist Leader, S. Harkishan Singh Surjit, contested bye-election in the Nakodar constituency against S. Harbans Singh, a Congress nominee. With the withdrawal of the Akali nominee, and full support having been extended by the Akalis to the Communists, the parties became closer to each other.



S. Bhupinder Singh Mann being sworn in as Cabinet Minister in the Rarewala Ministry

On 22/12, two No Confidence Motions were moved : one by Shri Brish Bhan and the other by S. Tirath Singh; and the Speaker fixed December 24, 1952, for the discussion. These 'Motions' hung like a sword of Damocles and the uncertainty about its result haunted the United Front Party. However, at that critical hour, S. Bhupinder Singh Mann, who always stood by S. Rarewala in weal and woe, came to the rescue of the Front by resigning from his Ministership in a jiffy so as to accommodate Ch. Nihal Singh Takshak, who resigned from the Congress on 2nd Dec. to be taken as a Minister by the Rarewala Cabinet the same day and that was how the merciful intervention of S. Mann buried the hopes of the Congress to topple the United Front Ministry in gloom as on 22/12, the No Confidence Motions stood defeated ; 23 votes were for

while 30 were against them. Three Communists and Mr. Bali Singh, a member of the Opposition, did not cast votes and the same day, the Assembly was adjourned sine die.

To keep the wolf off the door, certain measures of land reforms were brought in so that the relations between the land-lords and the tenants, which had deteriorated and become strained resulting in an explosive situation, could improve and the policies being economically



S. Dara Singh being congratulated on his induction to the Ministry of Education and Development. On his right side is S.B.S. Mann, while S. Rarewala is on his left side. S. Dhanna Singh Gulshan is second from the extreme left.

orientated, did benefit the poor section of the Society as much surplus land, which became available to the Government, owing to the lowering down of the permissible area to the extent of 100 Standard Acres, was distributed among the landless persons, while the non-occupancy tenants were made the owners of their respective lands after they paid 90 times the land revenue. During that regime, there was complete mutual understanding, good will and above all communal harmony between the two sister communities. It is, however, an unpleasant truth that in some parts of the State, the people were not having balmy days as there was complete negation of law and order and one could not dare to go out after the sun set.

With the imposition of the President's Rule in Pepsu and Kerala, the general impression of the people was that the Congress could not

countenance that the already popular United Front Ministries could be more fortified and well-entrenched as to spoil the future Congress prospects; and to further permit it to successfully govern the States was like a red rag to a bull for the Congress High Command.

PRESIDENT'S RULE IN PEPSU.

The ministerial crisis developed in Pepsu when on February 21, 1953, S. Gian Singh Rarewala and S. Mihan Singh Gill were unseated by the Election Tribunal. "In those days a secret inquiry was going on against the Maharaja of Patiala, on the allegations that he had financed the Akalis by mis-using his position and office. The Maharaja was put to choice : either to face the inquiry or to proceed to a foreign country for two years and, in his absence, the Maharaja Faridkot, the Up Raj Parmukh, was to discharge the functions of the Raj Parmukh. S. Gian Singh Rarewala was also taken into confidence by the Centre and was asked to resign with the understanding that he was to be appointed as an Adviser during the President's Rule. Maharaja Patiala counselled his uncle, S. Rarewala, to resign which he accordingly did on March 1, 1953, but before doing so, the Akalis were never consulted by S. Rarewala, and they were apparently taken by complete surprise with the sudden, untimely and unexpected resignation of the Party's leader. It is quite obvious that the Ministry could have been kept intact particularly when S. Rarewala could have continued to be in the office upto six months more and when the United Front Party was in clear majority, but the Congress High Command was all and all out to dismiss the non-Congress Ministry."[4]

On March 4, 1953, the Constitution in Pepsu was suspended by the President of the Indian Union, and on the next day, the President issued a proclamation assigning to himself all the functions of the Government. Pepsu administration was to be carried on by the Raj Parmukh under the general supervision, direction and control of the President and he was to be assisted by an Advisory Committee to be appointed by him. "When S. Rarewala was not appointed as the Adviser, his associates burnt the effigy of democracy."[5]

The above version relating to S. Rarewala's role and as given by S. Dara Singh was strongly controverted by S. Bhupinder Singh Mann. He stated that S. Rarewala was left with no other choice since the Raj Parmukh had already given in writing to the States Ministry that the law and order situation in Pepsu stood paralysed necessitating the

imposition of the President's Rule, and that he along with S. Rarewala met the Raj Parmukh at Delhi, 2/3 days earlier from the proclamation of the President's Rule and the latter told that he was forced to do so, and was not allowed even to send the above report on his official pad from Patiala. According to S. Mann, when Mr. R.A. Kidwai, a Union Cabinet Minister, was contacted, he lamented that he could do nothing as the Maharaja had already submitted his report and when Dr. Ambedkar was informed about the latest developments, the Dr. spoke the next day in the Upper House of the Parliament that he felt like burning the 'book'* for which he had put in so much hard work. When asked about the role of the Maharaja, S. Mann opined that the Maharaja was veering around the Congress particularly when the Maharani had become politically closer to Pt. Nehru and that was the reason that the Maharaja openly supported the Congress in the 1954 elections. Moreover, the Maharaja's family, according to S. Mann, took strong exception to the Akalis' supporting the merger of Pepsu with the Punjab, while the Akalis on the other hand, were eager for the merger as it would have expedited the formation of the Punjabi Suba, whose conception was entirely different from what the Suba is today.

Mr. P. S. Rao, I. C. S ** took charge as the Adviser in Pepsu on March, 10, 1953. One of the main reasons for which Mr. Rao, Adviser to the Raj Parmukh, was sent to Pepsu was to infuse a new spirit in the Congress so that it could come victorious in the elections to be held in 1954. Mr. Rao, who was, indeed, gifted with animal spirits, did not plough the sands; rather he took the bull by the horns and strained every nerve in presenting Pepsu with a clean and an efficient administration. Most of the bad-character people owed allegiance either to S. Rarewala, S. Kairon or Col. Raghbir Singh, who were constrained to patronize the 'necessary evil' in the democratic set-up. The undesirable and the notorious element in the Society got the sack somuch-so that the Police was ordered even to kill the most dangerous segment out of them. All the criminals got wind of it and left the state or were done away with.

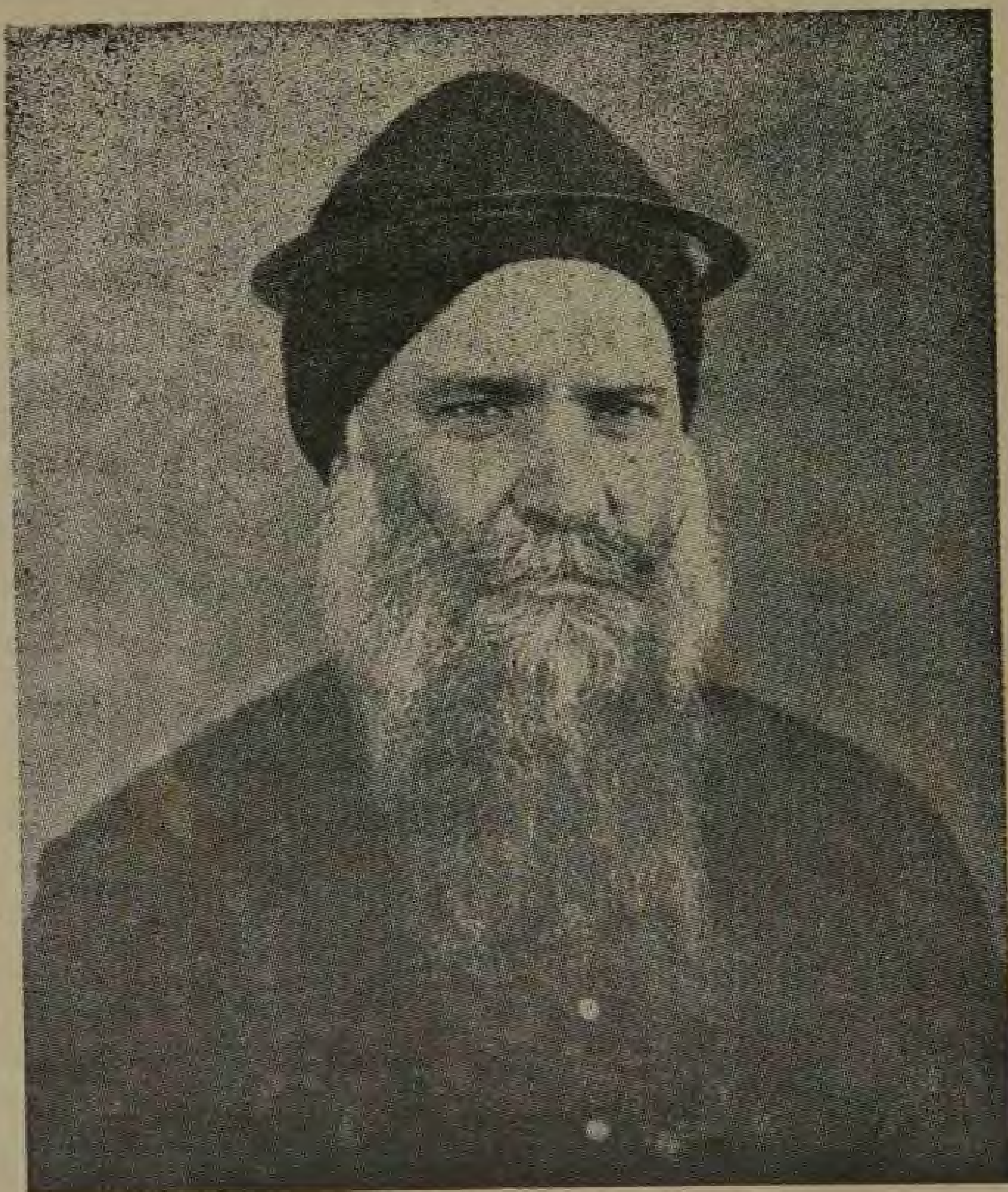
1954—Pepsu Elections.

The Congress party—both at the Centre and at the State—was fully geared to meet the challenge of the Opposition. Dr. K. N. Katju had

*Indian Constitution.

**Mr. Rau was awarded Padma Bhushan on April 27, 1957, for his meritorious services in Pepsu during the President's Rule.

come to Patiala on November 19, 1953, and made an announcement that the elections would be held in Pepsu by March, 1954, and similarly, Dr. Rajindera Parsad who had also visited Pepsu on December 21, assured the people that the elections would be held in a very fair and peaceful way. Pt. Nehru visited Fatehgarh Sahib on December 27, while Shri Jagjivan Ram, the Union Cabinet Minister, canvassed support for the Congress and visited Bhatinda on February 4. He bitterly criticised the Akalis on the ground that "they had deviated themselves from Guru's path." The Congress Election campaign was conducted by S. Mussafir, S. Kairon, Col. Raghbir Singh and Mr. Brish Bhan, while Master Tara Singh left no stone unturned in achieving success for his party. Those were the days when Pepsu Akali Dal was split up between groups of S. Sampuran Singh Raman and S. Pritam Singh Gojran, the latter owing allegiance to the Shiromani Akali Dal headed by Master Tara Singh. "In order to get the differences patched up, the unity talks were held at Patiala, at the residence of S. Dara Singh, and after a lot of discussion, all the leaders including Principal Iqbal Singh (Akali Dal's Acting President), S. Hukam Singh, Giani Kartar Singh, S. Dara Singh, S. Inder Singh Lehri, S. Raman, S. Dhanna Singh Gulshan, and S. Rajinder Singh agreed that Raman Group be given 4 seats in



S. Pritam Singh Gojran, a protagonist of Sikh State, was elected as the President of Pepsu Akali Dal on March 25, 1953. He was an active supporter of Master Tara Singh, however, his leadership was stoutly opposed by S. Sampuran Singh Raman, who founded the Pepsu Riyasti Akali Dal.

lieu of its undertaking to lend an unflinching and unfettered support to the Akali party but when they went to S. Rarewala's house for the confirmation of the agreement, S. Rarewala refused point blank, and, thus, the differences, instead of getting resolved, became more bitter and venomous making the future Akali election prospects lamentably poor and bleak".[6] The results of the Pepsu elections were completed on March 5, 1954, and the party position was: Congress 37; right wing Akalis 10; left wing Akalis 2;Communists 4; and Independents 7. S. Kirpal Singh Shant and S. Dhanna Singh Gulshan were elected on the ticket of left wing Akali Dal led by

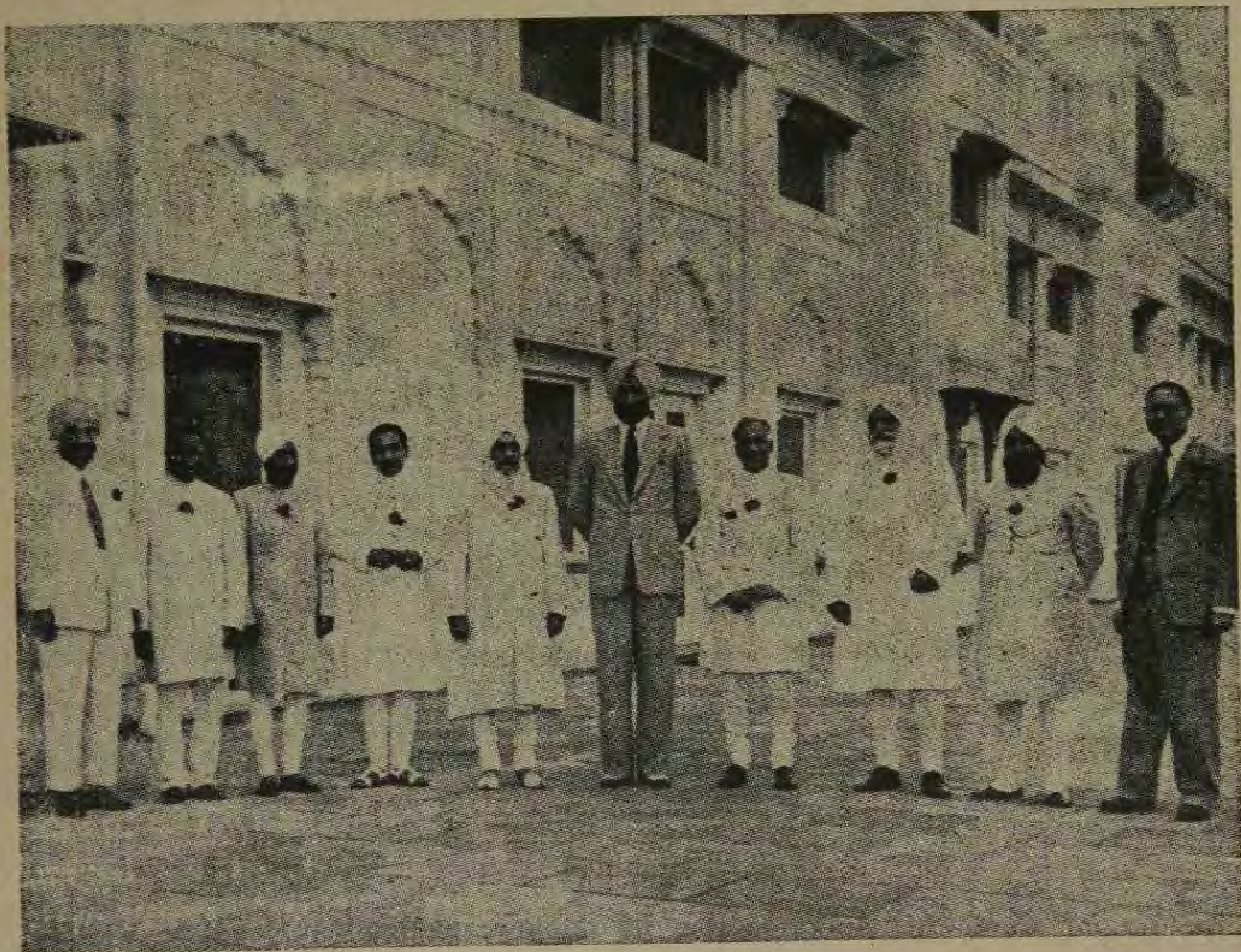


(S. Sampuran Singh Raman addressing the convention of the Riyasti Akali Dal on June 21, 1953, at Patiala calling upon Master Tara Singh to retire from politics. S. Ajaib Singh Machaki Advocate is seen sitting towards the right side of Jathedar Raman.)

Jathedar Raman. S. Gian Singh Rarewala, Raja Faridkot and S. Pritam Singh Samana were some of the candidates who were elected as independents. On the right wing Akali Dal's ticket, Sardarni Rarewala, S. Pritam Singh Gojran, S. Atma Singh, and S. Kartar Singh Diwana were the prominent persons elected.

Colonel Raghbir Singh Becomes The Chief Minister For The Second Time.

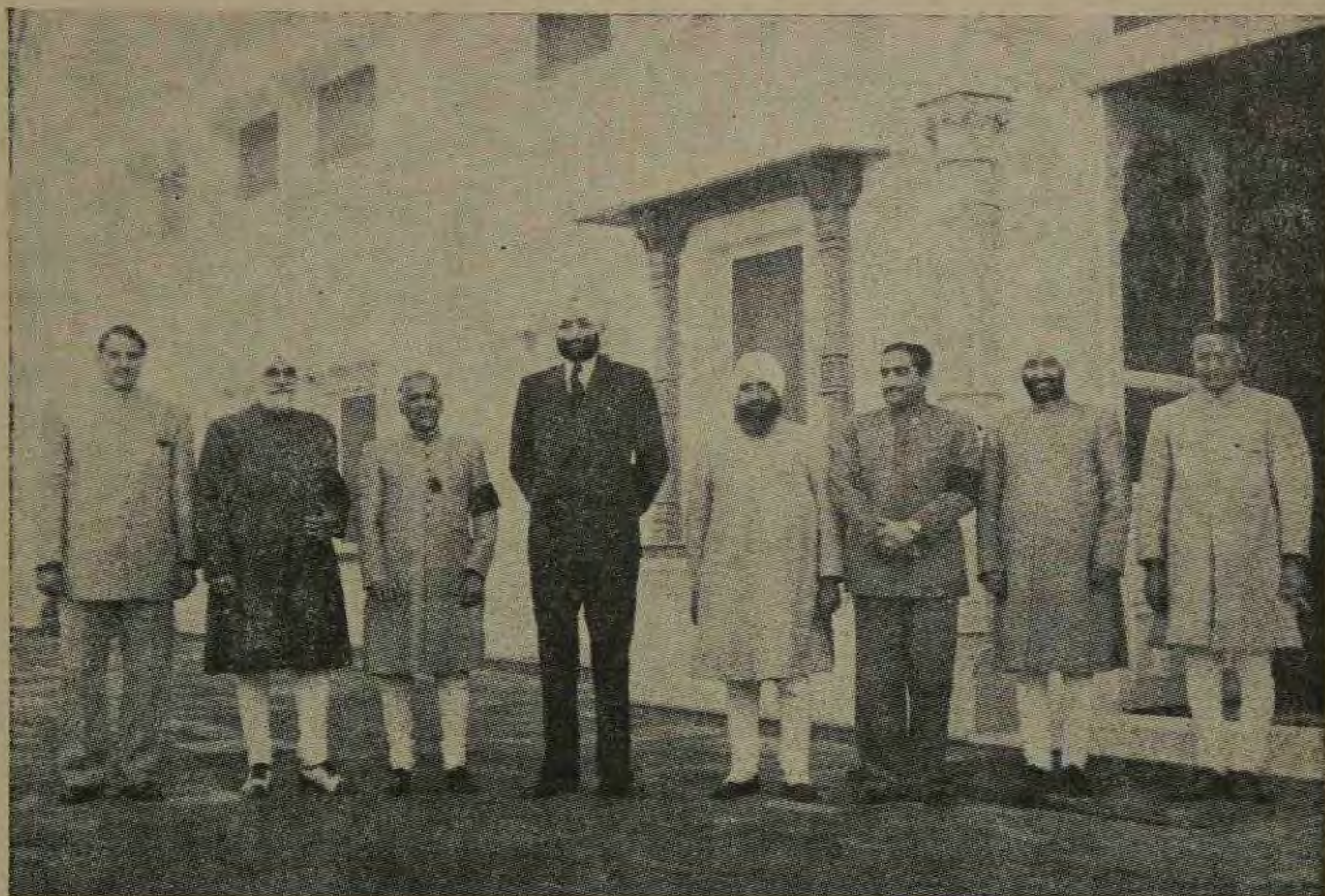
On March 6, 1954, Col. Raghbir Singh was elected, of course, unanimously, as the leader of the Pepsu Congress Assembly Party. Col. was also the President of the Congress. On March 8, Col. and Shri Brish Bhan were sworn in, while Gen. Shiv Dev Singh, the former Prime Minister of erstwhile Nabha State, was administered oath on 25-3-1954. Mr. Surindra Singh and S. Harcharan Singh were inducted as Ministers, and Shri Sadhu Ram Harijan and S. Prem Singh Prem were taken as the Deputy Ministers on 11/5, when Shrimati Chandravati was also accommodated as the Parliamentary Secretary to the C. M. Indisputably, there was rigging particularly in the Narnaul area but the Akalis had a complete knockdown because of the split between Gojran and Raman groups.



(L to R.) S Ranbir Singh, Chief Secretary; Shri Sadhu Ram; S. Prem Singh Prem; Mr. Surindra Singh (Raja of Nalagarh); Col. Raghbir Singh; Maharaja Patiala; Mr. Brish Bhan; Gen. Shivdev Singh; & S. Harcharan Singh, Advocate of Bhatinda.

Congress Ministry With Mr. Brish Bhan As The Head Formed.

Col. Raghbir Singh died of blood cancer on January 7, 1955, and his body was cremated the next day. The 4-mile long funeral procession

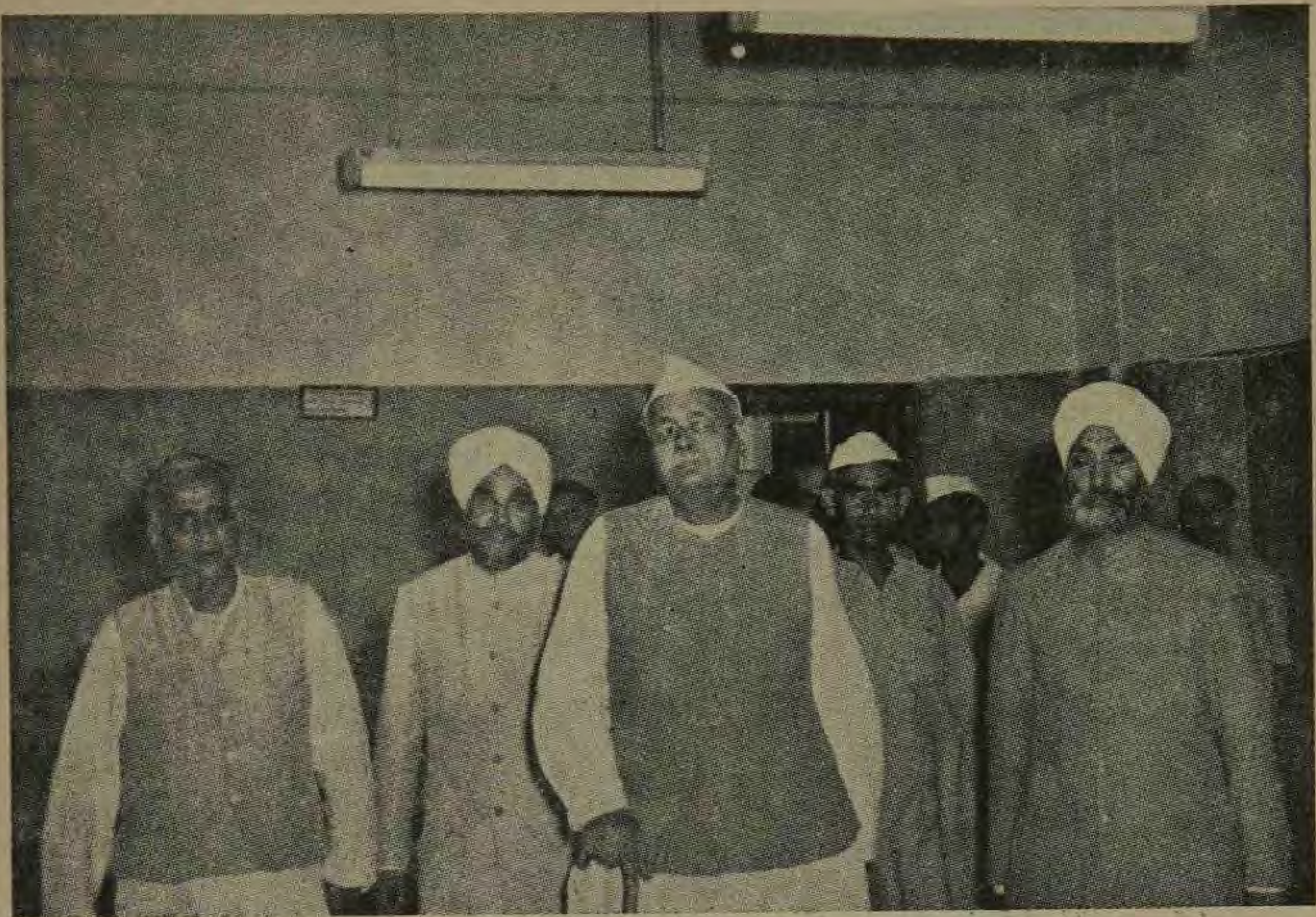


(L to R) Maj. Amir Singh; Gen. Shiv Dev Singh; Mr. Brish Bhan; Maharaja of Patiala (Raj Parmukh); S. Harcharan Singh; Shri Surindra Singh (Raja of Nalagarh); S. Prem Singh Prem; and Shri Sadhu Ram.

bore ample testimony to his popularity. According to notification of the Home Department of Pepsu Government dated January 8, Mr. Brish Bhan was appointed as the Chief Minister, while 4-man Pepsu Cabinet consisting of Mr. Brish Bhan as the Head, S. Harcharan Singh, Raja Surindra Singh and Gen. Shiv Dev Singh was sworn in at 12-30 P. M. on January 12 at the Moti Bagh Palace consequent upon the death of the Colonel. Prior to it, S. Harcharan Singh met and informed the Home Minister, Mr. G. B. Pant, about his having the majority support of the Congress legislators and it was pointed out to the Congress High Command that Mr. Brish Bhan was discriminating against his supporters, but he did not succeed as the Congress High Command was interested in entrusting the Government to Mr. Brish Bhan. Later on, S. Prem Singh Prem, Shri Sadhu Singh and Maj. Amir Singh were also inducted in the Ministry. At the time of swearing in ceremony, Mr. Brish Bhan and the Raja of Nalagarh bore black badges mourning the death of Col. Raghbir Singh.

MR. BRISH BHAN.

No doubt, he was pro-Communist, not because of his progressive views but because he was bitterby opposed to the Akalis." (Bhupinder Singh Mann.)



(L to R): Mr. Brish Bhan, S. Ranbir Singh, Pt. Gobindballabh Pant, and Dr. Ganda Singh, a noted Sikh historian.

Shri Brish Bhan was born in village Moonak (Akalgarh) in 1908, and his father L. Nand Lal, belonged to a lower middle class family. Mr Brish Bhan took his Law Degree from Law College, Lahore, in 1932. During that period, he took an active part and interest in politics, and was deeply moved by the death of Lala Lajpat Rai. He started his legal practice at Sunam and was jailed five times between 1932 to 1946 because of his participation in the freedom movement; in all, he spent about five years in the jails.

Mr. Brish Bhan worked as the General Secretary of State People's Conference (Praja Mandal) from 1936-1942, and as its President from 1942-1948. During that period, he was also a member of the Working Committee of the above Conference. On the persuasion of Shri Pattabhi Sitaramiah, the President of All India Congress Committee, Mr. Bhan left his practice and became a whole-time politician. He had been working as the President of the PEPSU Pradesh Congress Committee since the formation of Pepsu till 1952. In 1948, when the Care-taker Ministry was to be formed, Mr. Bhan was offered the ministry which he declined as he was not prepared to work under S. Rarewala, "who represented the interests of



(Mr. Brish Bhan with Doctors Khushdeva Singh and Jagdish Singh, the Saint-Doctors.)

the land-lords and the Capitalists".* Mr. Brish Bhan worked as the Home Minister in Col. Raghbir Singh's Ministry and he took over as the Chief Minister after the death of the Col. He continued to occupy that position till November 1, 1956, when Pepsu was merged in Punjab. During his tenure, the Pepsu Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act was passed bringing the land-owners' permissible area to 30 Standard Acres only, and, moreover, proprietory rights were conferred upon the tenants, and the Pepsu Transport was nationalized and great stress was laid on the over-all development of the State particularly in the Education and the Health Departments. Medical College and Thapar Institute of Engineering were opened during his period. Mr. Brish Bhan became the Deputy Chief Minister after the merger, but he could not see eye to eye with S. Kairon, who, according to him, worked hard to defeat him in 1957—Elections at the hands of Raja Mahesh Inder Singh. However, he was elected to the Punjab Legislative Council, while in 1962 General Elections, he was elected to the Punjab Vidhan Sabha and was inducted as a Minister under S. Kairon. He raised his voice against Kairon's "despotic

*Words of Mr. Bhan during my Interview.



(L to R) Mr. Brish Bhan, Maharani Mohinder Kaur, President Dr. Rajindra Parsad, the Raj Parmukh (Maharaja Patiala) and Mr. Thapar. The photograph relates to 1956, when the Thapar Engineering and Technology Institute was founded.

and autocratic rule" and became the leader of the dissidents. The reason for his being dropped from the Cabinet on January 1, 1963, was "the protest raised against the false implication of Mr. M. S. Tarsikka, a Communist M.L.A., in a murder case by S. Kairon". Mr. Brish Bhan also worked as the Deputy Chief Minister with S. Gurmukh Singh Mussafir. He again won the elections to the Punjab Vidhan Sabha from Lehra Constituency. However, in 1969 mid-term poll, he lost to Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, but after three years, he avenged the defeat and got elected in 1972, after defeating Sant Longowal. During Giani Zail Singh's regime, Mr. Brish Bhan did not find himself in tune with Giani and he again played the role of the dissident leader.

After the Allahabad High Court judgment, he was one of a few Congressmen to ask for Mrs. Gandhi's resignation. Eventually, he left the Congress and joined the Congress for Democracy Party under the leadership of Mr. Jagjivan Ram. In June, 1977, he was defeated at the hands of a rebel Akali and these days, he is working as the Senior Vice President

of the Punjab Janta Party. I had the privilge to interview Mr. Brish Bhan for a few hours. He rightly claimed that his biggest achievement included the eradication of corruption in the administration as well as in the public life; the complete restoration of communal harmony among the Hindus and the Sikhs; the nationalisation of transport and the legislative measures through which the lot of the down-trodden stood fairly improved and above all the erection of a statue of Seva Singh Thikrivala (1878-1935).



S. Seva Singh Thikriwala.
(1878-1935)

He spoke as much in favour of Master Tara Singh as against S. Partap Singh Kairon, who "lacked the co-ordination be tween the heart and the head." Adverting to Master Ji, he called him a scrupulously honest, straight-forward and a conscientious politician. When he was asked to give his valuable suggestions to the Government and the people, he very humbly remarked that the Goverment must redress the people's grievances as expeditiously as possible, while the people must learn that the constant vigilance is the price of liberty.

EPILOGUE : PEPSU.

In strength the Congress and the Akalis were evenly balanced, while it had a short and unstable career. A noted Sikh historian S. Khushwant Singh hit the head of the nail when he wrote : "The concentration of Sikh population and its Akali proclivities induced the government to abolish PEPSU in 1956 and merge it into East Punjab"......while the "Akalis were naive enough to proclaim that the abolition of PEPSU and the "Regional Formula" was the first victory in the battle for the Punjabi Suba".

SOURCES AND NOTES

1 Integration of Indian States by Mr. V. P. Menon

2 & 3 A History of Sikhs Vol. II by S. Khushwant Singh

4 & 6 Interview with S. Dara Singh, Advocate.

All India Sikh Students' Federation

"A. I. S .S. F is a school where the Sikh students get Missionary Training."

(S. Parduman Singh Azad.)

"It is an imortant institution furnishing recruiting ground for the future Sikh leadership."

(Author.)

"The All India Sikh Students' Federation came into existence in 1944, and it had a pedestrian beginning. It was a mere trickle in 1944, the year of its birth, it steadily became a Stream running like a red thread in the veins of the Community till it virtually pervaded its life. Spreading from its humble birth place in Lahore, it now, in extent, claims established branches not only all over the country, but has its firm adherents and workers in many continents, where they carry on its mission and spread its ideology. In depth, the Federation claims having thrown its former members into all walks of life viz., religious, political, educational, administrative, judicial, trade, industry and commerce where they retain the unmistakable leaven of their former association and grounding in the Federation.

The Sikh Youth was going astray from its moorings, neglecting its own rich heritage, and was beginning to run after the straws in the wind. It was doing this not because it found its own moorings unreal or its own heritage wanting but just because it could not evaluate and assess its inheritance. The case of Sikh religion, culture and heritage was going by default and that was precisely where the All India Sikh Students' Federation stepped-in to fill in that vacuum and started in earnest to inculcate the knowledge of its heritage in the Sikh youth and it, as a matter of fact, yielded rich dividends. The cobwebs in the mind of the Sikh Youth were removed and the response was not only encouraging but also satisfying. The Sikh Youth, a very fine human raw material, responded because those who understood found their heritage very rich and readily returned to their moorings. As a consequence, the Federation claims a very large and fine bunch of Sikh Youth, spread not only home but the World over, carrying aloft the torch of Sikhism not only at here but even in outlandish places and it has stood on its own ground despite very heavy odds.

The Federation relied on methodical and painstaking work to achieve this measurable success. In addition to organising branches and holding conferences, it relied largely on study circles whenever and

When was Af. Sikh Youth League formed?

wherever it could, so that it could meet a large number of Sikh Youth face to face and discuss the whole range of problems at very close quarters. The Federation found this approach of personal contact very rewarding and as an enlargement of this strategy, the Federation took the bold step of organizing training camps, the first of which was held on the hoary and sacred soil of Paonta Sahib in 1949, whose success was beyond expectation as it gave a big crop of workers and missionaries to the Federation who are to this day spreading the light of Guru Nanak in all corners of the world. Discipline of the strictest type, punctuality, knowledge about the Sikh Gurus, Gurbani, Sikh History, the story of the Sikhs' survival when prices were put on their heads, the essentials of Sikh culture, current fallacies which are making fatal inroads into the vitals of the Sikhs, key expressions in Gurbani, which can lead to its understanding, Kirtan by trainees, community service of langar, recitation of prayers at their proper timings, were the highlights of these camps whose rigours were only relieved by a camp fire before the trainees retired for the night to be awakened again at ambrosial hours—the next morning. These camps left a great indelible impact on the lives of the trainees which is one of the reasons why this cult of the camps spread throughout the length and breadth of the country.



S. Pritam Singh Gojran inspecting the guard of honour at the AISSF Camp held at Paonta Sahib in 1949. On his right side is Dr. J.S. Neki, who succeeded S. Sarup Singh, while on his left is S. Umrao Singh.

The Federation took great care to educate itself taking the Guru as the only valid teacher. This is because it found the existing set of preachers wholly inadequate, ill-educated and ill-fitted to ignite any spark in the Sikh Youth. The workers trained at one camp go and spread that education in their respective areas with the result that the Federation was able to cover the entire country with a net-work of camps and study circles, and this has been a very remarkable feature of the work of the Federation.

Politically, the Federation stood and still stands for the creation of an environment in which the national expression of the Sikhs would find its full satisfaction, a consistency, which is so uncharacteristic of Sikh politics. Basically, the Federation felt its main duty was to prepare and train the Sikh Youth to take an honourable part on the broad canvas of Sikh affairs in a comprehensive manner in their post-study lives but as the Sikhs were passing through a very convulsive period of their history during the years when the Federation was born, many members and former members of the Federation were drawn into the vortex of current politics wherein they made notable contributions. The year of inception of the Federation and thereafter were the years of transfer of power from the British hands which took a violent turn in the Punjab and took a heavy toll of human life, loss of property and uprooting resulting in a great human misery. The Federation took full share of the sufferings and lost many lives in the process.

Indian independence saw the Sikh problems as they were. For nineteen years they were engaged in a struggle for a Punjabi-speaking State which included three grim agitations. Members of the Federation and its erstwhile members made their full contribution to those struggles which would shine in any faithful chronicle of these long-drawn struggles. The Punjabi-speaking State that finally came into being found itself truncated and moth-eaten and even today a whole gamut of problems still face the Sikhs. These problems would have been far less acute if all these years Sikh leadership had given due weight to the timely advice given to it from one crucial moment to another by the Federation but that was not be be the case. The Federation toed an independent line of thinking taking the problems as they face the Sikhs in the most pragmatic manner.

The Federation did a remarkable job in paying attention to the long neglected Sehajdhari limb of the Sikhs, a move which was long due and it also claims its share in creating the right atmosphere for establishing

the two Universities viz., the Panjabi University and Guru Nanak University.



Get-together of the old federationists. From L. to R. Principal Gurbux Singh Shergill. Dr. Jaswant Singh Neki, S. Sarup Singh, S. Bhan Singh and S. Nirbhai Singh Dhillon.

The Federation's has been a saga of service and humility. The Federation has been able to achieve all this, despite its meagre resources and despite jealousy engendered by its success and attempts to throttle its existence. Notwithstanding this, the Federation has survived because of its high-minded sense of mission and its inner strength of character. It had its period of recession as all organisations do have, but it is now in a state of full resurgence which is truly remarkable for a basically Students' organisation.

It would be highly invidious and unjust to name any particular worker of the Federation. On the whole it was and is still being served by a band of selfless and self-effacing devoted and dedicated workers whose only reward is the sense of being engaged in the service of their fellow men and women."[1]

"The A. I. S S. F. had stepped in to perform the role of propagating the Sikh religion and more importantly of spreading the Akali ideology among the Sikh student body, and it was established in 1943[2] by a group of Akali leaders who felt the need for an organisation of

Sikh students that would be acceptable and sympathetic to Dal. While educated Sikhs looked upon Akali leaders as uneducated or semi-educated, highly irrational and unreasonable with no programme except having good meals at the Gurdwaras, the Akali leaders ridiculed the educated Sikhs as primarily opportunist, coward and highly selfish men. It was to bring Sikh intelligentsia closer to the Dal. Its basic philosophy and aims are the same as of the Dal. Through study circles in schools, colleges, conferences and training camps sponsoring baptismal ceremonies and publishing a bulletin, it seeks to indoctrinate the Sikh students in the separate political entity of the Sikhs and in the interest of the creation of *Desh-kal* in which our national expression can find its full satisfaction. The ultimate aim according to them is the realisation of such an order of society where the national aspirations of the Sikhs would find their fullest satisfaction. It has been a source of tremendous strength to the Dal, being a recruiting ground for an educated leadership and for active assistance at times of elections and agitations. In 1957 it decided to remove itself from politics, however, it would seem to be a repudiation of its traditional stand of the inseparability of religion and politics and the independent political entity of the Sikhs."[3]



S. Bhag Singh Annakhi an old federationist who is now the President of Amritsar Urban Akali Dal, Member Incharge Central Khalsa Orphanage & Joint Secretary, Khalsa College, Amritsar.

The aims and objects of the AISSF are : (1) to organise the Sikh students with a view to protect and promote their interests; (2) to inculcate in them love for the lofty teachings of our Great Gurus and to make them conscious of their rich heritage as Sikhs; (3) to arouse consciousness of their separate entity and nationality amongst the Sikh students and to prepare and train them for the creation of an environment in which our national expression can find its full satisfaction; (4) to hold discourses on Gurbani, Sikh History and Sikh culture and to reveal their implications on life; and (5) to create zeal for missionary work for the social, moral, economic, political, educational and cultural uplift of the Sikhs.

"In 1943 was born the Sikh Students' Federation. It was the result of the growing interest of Sikh students in the affairs of the community and the patronage that a group of the Akali leaders was extending to them. The Sikh intelligentsia had been hitherto ignored by the people who mattered in Sikh politics. It was now realised that this element could bring added strength to the Panthic organisation. New newspapers like the Ajit were launched to educate the people in the new ideas."[4]

In the early forties, the Muslim students had organised themselves into Muslim Students' Federation, while the Communists had sponsored Students' Federation. The Congress was patronising the Students' Congress, but the Sikh students were out of moorings and they were either ignorant or indifferent towards their rich heritage. At a function of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, *Patit* (renegade) Maharaja of Kapurthala was invited to preside over a commemorative function and the Sikh students took exception to the honour being given to him. The Sikh students led by S. Amar Singh Ambalvi raised slogans "Patit Maharaja go back". S. Ambalvi was arrested but he came out fully determined to bring the Sikh students under the banner of a well-knit organisation, and he along with S. Avtar Singh Daler formed All India Youth Sikh League, which, however, could not keep its tempo for long and, eventually, a meeting of the Sikh students' representatives was convened in the Law College hostel and it was attended by thirteen representatives namely: Sardars Sarup Singh, Amar Singh Ambalvi, Jawahar Singh Grewal, Sardul Singh Latak, Raghbir Singh, Ranbir Singh Sodhi, Narinder Singh, Kesar Singh, Dharambir Singh, Jagir Singh, Inderpal Singh, Agya Singh and Balbir Singh. A call was issued to the Sikh students under the heading "Sikh Students Organise" and it was signed by the aforesaid students' representatives. Another meeting of a large number of Sikh students' representatives was called at 13 Maclagan Road, Lahore, where the sub-offices of Shiromani Akali Dal and S. G. P. C. were situated and from where Ajit and Akali Patrika were being published. The organisation was named as the All India Sikh Students' Federation (A. I. S. S. F.) and S. Sarup Singh was elected its first President in October 1944 while S. Jawahar Singh and S. Sardul Singh became the Vice-President and the Secretary respectively. The Constitution of the A. I. S. S. F. was unanimously passed in the above meeting and the office of the organisation was also opened in a room in the same building where Akali Dal's office was situated. Soon after, the units were organised at Amritsar, Gujranwala, Lahore, Lyallpur, Montgomery, Faridkot and other places.

In June 1945, the Federation did a remarkable job by organising *Amrit Parchar* Conference in F. C. College, Lahore, where 51 students were baptised at the hands of 5 Piaras namely : Master Tara Singh, Bawa Harkishan Singh, Principal Jodh Singh, Prof. Sahib Singh and Jathedar Mohan Singh. The first Annual Session of the Federation took place in October 1945, at Gujranwala where the youth leaders called upon the Sikh leadership to keep the separate entity of the Sikhs and to be more assertive and emphatic about the Sikh rights; and the second Annual Session of the A. I. S. S. F. was held at Maharaja Dalip Singh Nagar, Gol Bagh, Lahore, on March 9, 1946, where the slogan of an independent Sikh State was given and a resolution to that effect was moved by S. Amar Singh Ambalvi and was supported by S. Swaran Singh, the former Defence Minister, and S. Ishar Singh Majhail. The above resolution was also adopted by the S. G. P. C. in its general meeting held on March 9, 1946. The Federation supported the Akali candidates in the General Elections held in 1945 and 1946 and its leaders S. Sarup Singh and S. Amar Singh Ambalvi also met Mr. Jinnah for exploring the feasibility of the demand for the Sikh State and at their instance, two meetings between Master Tara Singh and Mr. Jinnah were arranged During the partition days, the Federation did a wonderful job in the evacuation and because of its workers, thousands of lives were saved.

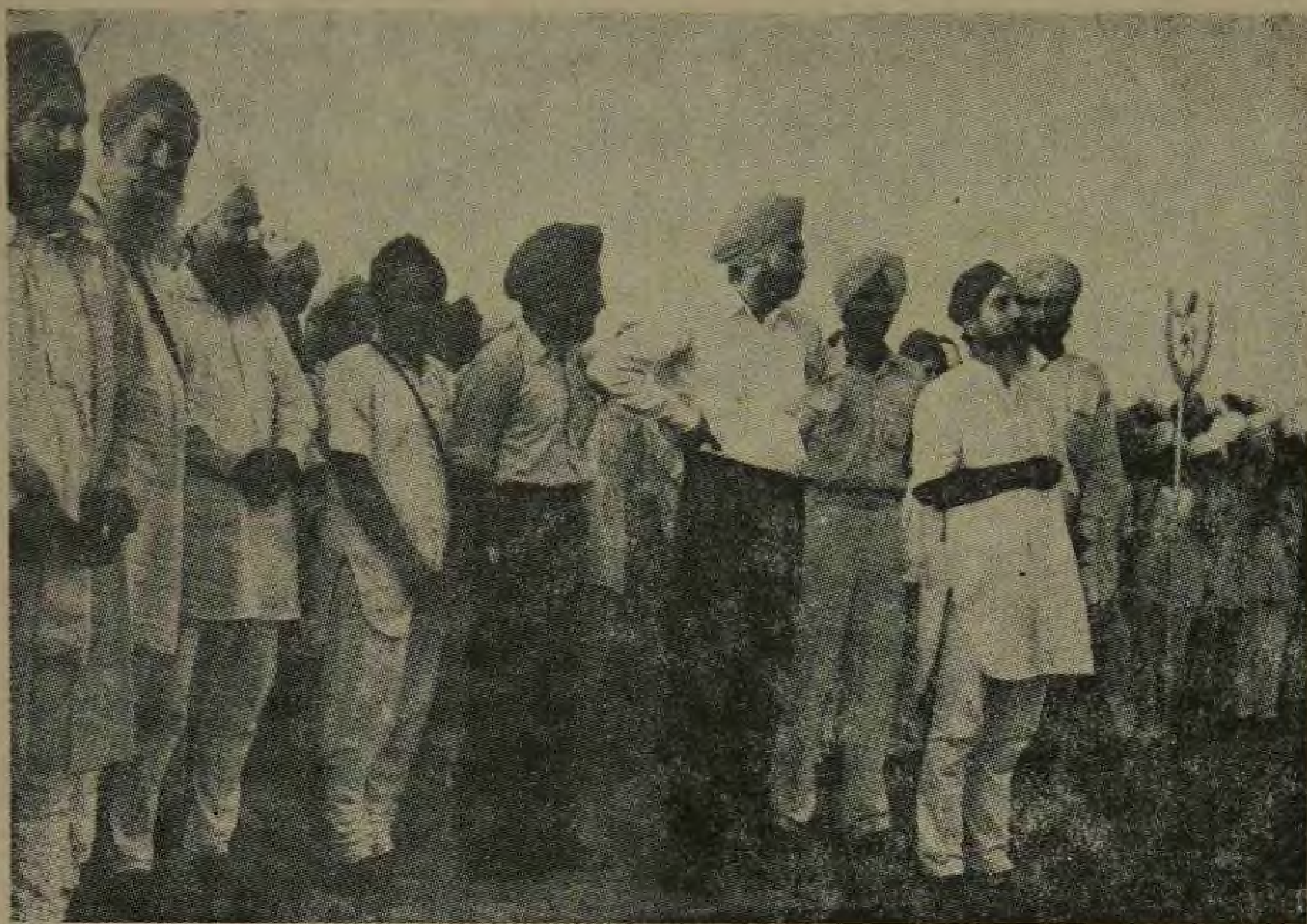
The independence of the country brought out a new wave of thinking in the Akali ranks as some of its leaders, who were divided into Nagoke and Gyani groups under the over-all leadership of Master Tara Singh, vied with each other to join the Congress to secure political power. A meeting of the Akali Dal Working Committee was held at the residence of S. Baldev Singh on March 17, 1948, and a decision was arrived at to permit the Panthic M. L. As. to join the Congress unconditionally. Master Tara Singh only acquiesced because of the overwhelming majority in favour of the resolution advising all the members of the Panthic Party both at the centre and in the East Punjab to join the Congress Assembly Party, however, he was evidently unhappy and felt isolated. At that crucial hour, the Federation came to his rescue and he was invited to preside over the Annual Conference of the A. I. S. S. F. held at Shaheed Gurdial Singh Nagar, Ludhiana, on April 24 and 25, 1948, and Master Ji felt bucked up. Giani Harbhagat Singh hoisted the flag in that Conference.

The perusal of the other chapters will bear ample testimony to the fact that whenever and wherever the Akali Dal fumbled, deviated, from its



Master Tara Singh is seen addressing the Annual Conference of A. I. S. S. F. held at Ludhiana on April 24 and 25, 1948. Sardars Amar Singh Ambalvi, Subeg Singh, Jaswant Singh Neki, Sarup Singh and Nirbhai Singh Dhillon are seen sitting in the front row along with Master Ji.

goal or groped in the dark, the Federation never hesitated in giving a red signal and acting as the lighthouse so that the Dal could steer clear its course. Dr. Neki's views about the Federation deserve attention. In his farewell address at the 3rd Annual Session of the Federation held at Jullundur on October 8, 1949, and presided over by S. Pritam Singh Gojran, Dr. Neki stated *inter alia*: "The Federation undertook to arouse among Sikh students a consciousness of 'Sikh Nationalism'. It strove to prepare and train them for the creation of an environment in which our national expression can find it full satisfaction. The programme that A. I. S. S. F. has followed during the 5 years has been multi-faceted—as also is our religion—and touched all aspects of our national life—religious, political, social, economic, cultural and educational; and pressed by circumstances, we had to devote more time to certain aspects at the expense of others, yet our ideal remains a uniform and corporate development of all these essential aspects. Press and platform alike were instrumental in the execution of our programmes. Conferences, diwans, meetings, public gatherings, literature in the form of leaflets, pamphlets, articles and news in the Press constituted our means. Stress was always laid on constructive and instructive rather than demonstrative and agitative work, and herein lay the superiority of our



S. Bhag Singh Gurdaspuri, a highly respectable Akali Leader, is seen inaugurating the third Annual Session of the AISSF held at Jullundur on October 8, 1949.

organisation over other student bodies." S. Hazara Singh (Wing Commander Retd.) and now a Supreme Court lawyer), who worked along with late S. Kesar Singh of District Rupar in the Federation, dwelt at length to prove that Giani Kartar Singh, to whom he always addressed as the *Faqir* politician, had been a constant source of inspiration to the Federation and his services as the chief adviser could hardly be exaggerated.

I may be excused for being personal, nevertheless, it is a pleasant revelation that if I am a Sikh by conviction today, it is because of the indoctrination and the training which was imparted to me in the 9th Central Training Camp of the A. I. S. S. F. inaugurated by S. (Justice) Harnam Singh on May 24, 1959, at Gurdwara Majnu Tilla Sahib, Delhi. I still recapitulate the days, when Prof. Jaswant Singh Phul, the then President of the Federation, inspired me to be the Federation's member. Obviously, the chapter of A I. S. S. F. deserves more importance as its role in the Sikh religion and politics is too important to be side-tracked. Intelligentsia and the youth constitute the back-bone of every community and it is the forum of the Federation through which they can be acquainted with their rich heritage. The Sikh leadership should help the Federation both morally and financially in its religious activities.

While talking to S. Gurcharan Singh Tohra about the Federation, Master Ji's observation about this Organisation was recalled; "Whenever a person joins A.I.S.S.F., within a short time, he develops a longing to become a minister or atleast an M. L. A." There is a great substance in the above opinion and steps should be taken to prevent the Federation from being mis-used as a spring-board to attain political offices. It would be of great interest and relevance to write a few lines about the Presidents who had the honour to serve the Federation during their respective tenures.

S. SARUP SINGH

S. Sarup Singh, the founder President, had been continuing as the President of the Federation from October 1944 to November 20, 1948, and during that period units were organised at all important places in the State. After his first election in 1944, at a grand rally and conference held at Gurdwara Dera Sahib, Lahore, he enlightened the youth with the Sikh heritage and because of his splendid and marvellous performance in the elections, he was re-elected as the President at the Session held at Teja Singh Samundri Hall in 1946. In the Annual Conference of the A. I. S. S. F. held at Ludhiana, on April 24 and 25, 1948, S. Sarup Singh was again elected as the President, while Dr. Santokh Singh, a widely respected man, was nominated as the Vice-President.

S. Sarup Singh, during his presidentship, had been exploring the possibility to have a sovereign Sikh State and in that connection, he had written the book "The Forgotten Panth" with a foreword by Master Tara Singh and he always stood for the religio-political rejuvenation of the Sikhs. He was born on September 16, 1917, in a fairly well-established family at Quetta (Baluchistan). His academic career had been excellent somuch so that he qualified written tests in I. C. S. competition twice. After independence, S. Sarup Singh took active part in the Akali politics with his basis well-entrenched in the A. I. S. S. F. He also remained Vice-President of the Akali Dal in 1950 and during his political career, he went to Jail thrice in the Akali movements. In 1952, he was elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly on the Akali ticket, while in 1957, when the Akalis had joined the Congress, he was elected to the Assembly on the Congress ticket. When the Akali Dal called upon the Congress M. L. A.s to leave the Congress Party in 1960, he was one of those, who obeyed the orders of the Akali Dal. He has been a perennial source of strength and inspiration to the A. I. S. S. F.

DR. JASWANT SINGH NEKI.

Dr. Jaswant Singh Neki was elected on November 20, 1948, as the President of the Federation at the Amritsar Annual Session held in

Teja Singh Samundri Hall and he continued to discharge functions till January 28, 1950, when S. Amar Singh Ambalvi was elected. Soon after his election, the Akali Dal resolved to hold a conference at Delhi. Dr. Neki along with Sardars Ajit Singh Sarhadi, Amar Singh Dosanjh, Ajit Singh Ambalvi, Ujagar Singh Ulfat, Gurbux Singh Advocate of Gurdaspur, Gurcharan Singh Duggal and Sarup Singh was arrested at Delhi when Master Ji was detained under the provisions of Bengal Regulation 3 of 1818 on February 19, 1949, on his way to Delhi for participating in the above Akali Conference. During his absence, the Federation organised agitation against Master Ji's arrest by taking out student's processions resulting in the closure of all the educational institutions throughout the State. Sardars Subeg Singh Advocate, Gursewak Singh (Principal), Nirbhai Singh Dhillon, Bhan Singh and Ajaib Singh Machaki and others worked around the clock to mobilise the public opinion against the above arrest.

Dr. Neki was the first President to introduce the holding of the training camps in the A I.S.S.F. and he is credited with holding and organising the first training camp at Paonta Sahib in 1949. Important Akali leaders including Master Tara Singh attended the camp. S. Sarup Singh was the Principal of the Camp, Dr. Neki Camp Commandant and S. Umrao Singh, Camp Adjutant, S. Parkash Singh, S. Gurmit Singh, S. Satbir Singh, Bhai Harbans Lal and S. Bhan Singh joined the Camp along with 40 other trainees.

Dr. Neki had been a merit scholarship-holder throughout his brilliant academic career; he graduated in Medicine and Surgery from Medical College, Amritsar, Punjab (1949)—annexing a medal for topping in Pathology, and got his Master's Degree in Psychology from the Muslim University, Aligarh. Widely travelled, he has participated in a variety of international conferences, seminars, consultancies, etc. and has now been nominated Vice-President of the World Federation for Mental Health for South-East Asia. He is considered a notable poet in the Panjabi language and has published two anthologies of miscellaneous verse, and two long poems. One of his books has received Bhai Vir Singh award for its merit, and he has also authored a number of articles on literary criticism. in 1978, he was appointed as the Director of Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences, Chandigarh. The most redeeming feature of Dr. Neki is that whomsoever I have met so for, every one spoke very high of him and he is considered one of the best exponents and propounders of the Sikh religion.

S. AMAR SINGH AMBALVI

On January 28, 1950, S. Amar Singh Ambalvi was elected as the President at the Annual Session held at Patiala. S. Amar Singh Ambalvi was born in 1917 at village Raulu Majra, a few miles from Rupar. He joined army in 1935, from where he resigned in 1939 and became very close to Giani Kartar Singh. He graduated privately in 1942 and he had been doing the spade work for organising the Youth into an ideal organisation. He was arrested in 1942, 1943, and 1950 and had the privilege to work as the General Secretary of the Akali Dal in 1946-47, 1948 and 1949. He has been and is still the chief exponent of keeping the separate entity of the Sikhs. He played a very prominent role in getting the famous Anandpur Sahib's resolution unanimously passed on October 17, 1973. During his presidentship, he brought the message of the Federation home by addressing student study-circles, meetings and conferences. He has always been a member of the group of extreremists in Akali Organisation. After doing M A., LL.B., he started practice in the Punjab High Court. S Ambalvi, who is always identified with the Federation, is exceptionally energetic, pushing and daring as well.



Giani Kartar Singh took keen interest in the activities of the Federation, The photograph relates to 1946 when Giani Ji is seen being flanked by S. Amar Singh Dosanjh and S. Amar Singh Ambalvi.

S. GURMIT SINGH.

S. Gurmit Singh was born in 1928, and he inherited the Sikh way of life from his father, S. Ajit Singh, a staunch Sikh soldier, who fought in the First World War and was appointed Sub Registrar, Mukatsar, later on. During his student career, he succeeded S. Karnail Singh Doad as the President of the Faridkot Sikh Students' Federation and he showed his mettle in the Zira by-elections when he alongwith

his younger brother S. Kharak Singh and Sardars Sarup Singh, Karnail Singh Doad, Nirbhai Singh Dhillon, Subeg Singh, Hardev Singh, Bhan Singh, Ajaib Singh Machaki and others worked around the clock to make the Panthic candidate, S. Rattan Singh Lohgarh, a success. The main issue during the elections was whether the Sikhs were with the Congress or with the Akali Dal and S. Lohgarh's victory with thumping majority showed the pro-Akali trend of the Sikh voters. He succeeded S. Ambalvi in 1951, as the President of the AISSF and continued to hold that office upto September 15, 1952. He was arrested many a time and had the distinction to serve the various ministries, the details of which have been furnished at various places in the book. He had been the General Secretary of the S. G.P.C. and held very important offices in other religious and political organisations.



Late S. Gurmit Singh

As a member of the working Committee of the Akali Dal, I always



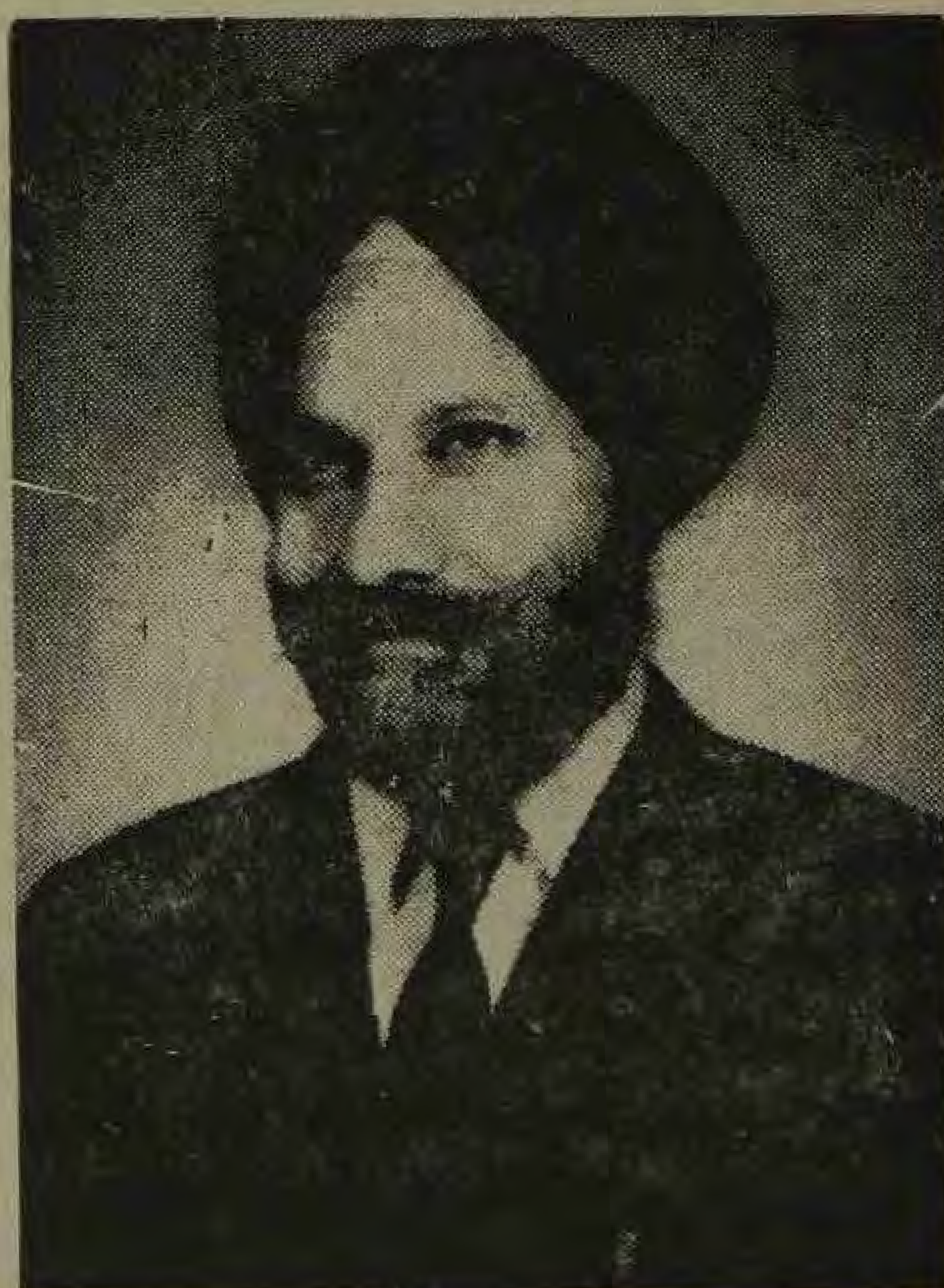
S. Gurmit Singh is seen addressing the Press Conference. Giani Hari Singh, Mr. R. L. Seth S. Ajaib Singh Tung, S. N. Parwuna and the Correspondent of Milap are seen in the Photograph, while S. Surjit Singh Atwal. a close fend of S. Gurmit Singh, is seen sittnig on the right side of the latter.

found him an extremely enlightened man whose views were not only illuminating but were also thought-provoking. He took keen interest in holding and organising the camps and study-circles of the AISSF He lost to the Congress candidate during the last General Elections to the Punjab Vidhan Sabha.

The end of S. Gurmit Singh, a person with fiery driving force and astonishing versatility coupled with indomitable will is, indeed, a heart rending and an agonising story. He died on December 5, 1977, at the age of 49 and the shabby, unbecoming and even humiliating--if not outspokenly hostile—treatment, given to him by the power-drunk persons at the helm of affairs during the allotment of the Faridkot by-election Parliamentary ticket, hastened his death. It is not an occasional but a frequent episode in the Indian and particularly the Punjab politics of leg-pulling, humiliation and character assassination that a candidate's plus points prove to be a liability as the persons who matter most are least interested in inducting a rival because the instinct of self-preservation and the presence of other complexes prompt them to nip him in the bud. It is not the merits of the candidate but the leaders' expediency which matters the most in the allotment of the tickets. The sad, unexpected and premature death of S. Gurmit Singh is sure to act as an eye-opener to the workers that if a dedicated and intellectual leader of his stature and calibre could be treated the way, he was treated, where is the guarantee that the rank and file would necessarily receive its due or face a better fate ?

S. BHAN SINGH

S. Bhan Singh was born at village Jahangir in district Lyallpur in 1927. He graduated from Govt. College, Ludhiana, and did his M. A. privately. He obtained Degree in Laws from the Punjab University Law College, Jullundur. He joined the A. I. S. S. F. in 1944, and was arrested in May 1947, on account of leading anti-Pakistan Students' movement in Lahore, where he was confined to Jail for 2½ months and had to face the spine-chilling brutalities and atrocities of the Muslim policemen at Lahore. During the presidentship of Dr. Neki, S. Bhan Singh worked as the Secretary of the A. I. S. S. F. While referring to



S. Bhan Singh

S. Bhan Singh, Dr. Neki in his farewell address stated : "Sardar Bhan Singh's conduct and character would be written in letters of gold in the history of the Federation; even in that of the Panth. It is indeed your good fortune as well as mine that he has been our Secretary. He has maintained and set up difficult traditions and traditions are the life-blood of organisations. His work as Acting President while I was under detention, was glorious and heroic. Defying danger, discomfort, dejection and difficulties, he worked like a hero and pulled the Federation through difficult times." After the arrest of Master Tara Singh and Dr. Neki and others, Sardars Subeg Singh Advocate, Shamsher Singh of World Bank, Nirbhai Singh Dhillon and Bhan Singh were the main persons who spear-headed the Sikh Students' movement against the above arrests and during that interval, the way S. Bhan Singh lost his wife and a newly born child is, indeed, a tragic and hair-raising event which endeared him the most so far the Sikh students were concerned.

He was elected as the President of the Federation on September 15, 1952, and continued to occupy that office upto January 13, 1954. His chntribution towards the Federation is not only tremendous but is also illustrious as well as emulating. Before his elevation to the member of the Sikh Gurdwaras Tribunal, Punjab, S. Bhan Singh acted as the Legal Adviser to S. G. P. C. and he also established and served the Central Sikh Museum from its inception in 1958 to 1976, as its curator. I am yet to find a person more obliging and sweet-tempered than S. Bhan Singh who is adored by the Sikh youth being its ideal leader. He is a person who would insist on be-friending the persons, he meets; his simple living and high-thinking have been inspiring the people around him.

S. SATBIR SINGH

S. Satbir Singh is the younger brother of S. Inderpal Singh, one of the thirteen members, who had founded the A. I. S. S. F. He was born in Jhelum with S. Harnam Singh, a timber merchant, as his father. In the first training camp held at Paonta Sahib, he was the youngest trainee. He did his graduation and M. A. from Khalsa College, Amritsar, and was engrained in religious studies and interpretation of Gurbani and came under the influence of well-known theologians namely: Prof. Sahib Singh and Principal Jodh Singh. He joined Lyallpur Khalsa College, Jullundur, as a lecturer and did a remarkable job of nourishing the Federation in that institution. He was elected as the President of the AISSF on January 13, 1954, at the 5th Annual Session held at

Ludhiana, and served the Federation in that capacity till November 31, 1954, when Bhai Harbans Lal was elected. He actively participated in the Punjabi Suba Struggle and was arrested along with other federationists including S. Bhan Singh on July 4, 1955, and remained in Ferozepore Jail for about 2½ months. He is a member of the S. G. P. C. having been elected from the Jullundur constituency. During the Punjabi Suba Struggle of 1960-61, his political base stood a little eroded because of his preference to the Sant's leadership and it proved like a red rag to a bull to the urban Sikhs who were obviously pro-Master Tara Singh and in whom S. Satbir Singh previously found himself well-entenched. S. Partap Singh Kairon took exception to S. Satbir Singh's active participation in the Punjabi Suba Struggle and at his instance, the President of the College Managing Committee gave S. Satbir Singh two options: either to apologise for his past conduct or to leave the College and S. Satbir Singh opted for the sack. After leaving the job, he acted as the Principal in Khalsa College, Yamunanagar, and later on, he became the Director of Gurmat College, Patiala.



Principal Satbir Singh inspecting the guard of honour by the Sikh students. Principal Gurbux Singh Shergill is also seen along with S. Hardev Singh, who is the General Secretary & S. Sarup Singh is the President of the Sikh Forum formed to enrol the ex-federationists, who being no longer the students, cannot work under the banner of the AISSF.

After the death of a great orator, Principal Ganga Singh*, S. Satbir Singh successfully filled in the vacuum so far the gift of the gab was concerned. He is capable of casting a spell on his audience. He moved heaven and earth in making the Federation a success and he invariably attended every training camp organised by it resulting in complete identification between him and the Federation. He is fairly diplomatic and is a man of considerable ability and literary accomplishments.



Principal Ganga Singh

BHAI HARBANS LAL

Bhai Harbans Lal was born in a *Sehajdhari family* in Haripur (Pakistan). He was introduced to the Federation in 1946, by Sardar Manmohan Singh Kohli of Mount Everest fame and since then, he has been rolling up his sleeves in serving this organisation. He was elected as the President of the AISSF on November 31, 1954, and continued to work in that office upto November 26, 1955. After qualifying the diploma in Pharmacy from the Medical College, Amritsar, he joined a well-known firm, Parke Davis and Co. and shifted his activities to Bombay, from where he started sponsoring the Sikh Students' Bulletin which spread the teachings of the Federation far and wide and acted as the unifying force in all the units. Before coming to Amritsar, Mr. Harbans Lal studied at Ambala, where Professor O. P. Kohli, a great



Bhai Harbans Lal

*S. Ganga Singh was a wonderful orator and worked as the Principal of the Sikh Missionary College, Amritsar, and that is how he was known as the Principal. When he delivered a lecture in the Muslim University, Aligarh, on Guru Nanak in 1959, the Head of the Persian Department remarked that he had never heard such a learned and beautiful speech in his life as made by the Principal. Col. Ajeet Singh Judge, the General Manager of Coca Cola Company, also narrated the incident when Principal Ganga Singh replied to the address delivered by the late Mr. Krishana Menon, former Defence Minister, in America. Principal's sequence-wise reply to 2-hour long address of Mr. Menon simply amazed the audience who felt spell-bound because of his (Principal) superb wisdom, oratory and grasp on almost every subject

theologian, indoctrinated him with Sikh religion, and philosophy. These days, he is settled in America as the Professor in an American University and has been doing missionary work. His contribution to the *Sehajdhari* wing of the Federation has been remarkable.



Bhai Harbans Lal being honoured at the 52nd A. I. Sikh Educational Conference held on October 27, 1974, at Kanpur. S. Gurdial Singh Dhillon and S. Dilbir Singh are also seen along with Bhai Harbans Lal.

S. BHARPUR SINGH

S. Bharpur Singh was born on July 9, 1933, at village 32, 2—L, Tehsil Ukara, District Montgomery (Pakistan). After partition, he shifted to district Ludhiana and graduated from A. S. College, Khanna. He passed his M.A. from Lyallpur Khalsa College, Jullundur. From 1956 to 1966, he had been working as a lecturer in the above institution. In the 1960-Akali agitation, S. Bharpur Singh worked as the Secretary to the Dal after the arrest of Giani Ajmer Singh and despite his remaining underground, he became the Senator from the Registered Graduates' Constituency and he also became the Senator for the second time after contesting from the College Teachers' Constituency. In 1966, he was appointed as the founder-Principal of Khalsa College, Garhdiwala, while in 1969, he was appointed by the Punjab Government as the first Registrar to the Guru Nanak Dev University. Because of his excellent services as the Registrar, he was appointed as the Chairman of Punjab School Education Board in 1977. He is also the member of the S.G.P.C.



S. Bharpur Singh addressing the gathering assembled at Jullundur to felicitate S. Jaswant Singh Phul on his being elected as the President of AISSF. S. Ajit Singh Sarhadi is seen facing the camera.

S. Bharpur Singh was elected as the President of the Federation on November 26, 1955, at the 7th Annual Session held at Jullundur, and he continued to hold that office upto January 18, 1958. Since Bhai Harbans Lal did not live in Punjab, therefore, the Federation Units had become dormant and inactive, hence, S. Bharpur Singh left no stone unturned in re-energising and activating the same. His wit and sense of humour are simply superb and he knows how, when and where to talk, and his psychological analysis is accurate, convincing and gives an idea of his penetrating vision and remarkable power of thinking.

During his tenure as the President, the biggest ever Amrit Parchar Samagam was held in the Khalsa College, Amritsar, where about 200 Sikh students got themselves baptised. He also organised a very big Convention on 12th and 13th May, 1957, at Gurusar Sudhar, where it was resolved *inter alia* : "The convention of the workers and Executive Members of the AISSF affirms and reiterates its fundamental and deep-rooted belief that the Sikhs must at all costs maintain their separate and exclusive political entity in order to safeguard themselves as being the permanent minority in India and to secure such social environment and political structure in which the Sikhs can freely lead life according to their own notions about it." He again organised the 7th Annual Training Camp, which was held at Sri Bala Sahib, Delhi, from July 14 to July 23, 1957, and was inaugurated by S. Bhan Singh and was attended among others by S. Amar Singh Ambalvi and Professor Satbir Singh.

S. JASWANT SINGH PHUL

S. Jaswant Singh Phul was born in 1934, and he joined AISSF as its member in his school career at Sri Anandpur Sahib. Soon he became the organiser of the Unit, and after his matriculation, he joined Khalsa College, Amritsar, where he distinguished himself as the best debator of the College and became President of the College Union. He became the President of the Khalsa College SSF and the Amritsar Circle in 1953-54. After graduating from there, he joined Lyallpur Khalsa College, Jullundur, and distinguished himself in his academic career getting 1st Class 1st in M. A. Political Science in September 1956. In the Organisation, he held the offices of Propaganda and General Secretaries and participated actively in moulding and directing the politics of AISSF and helping it to



S. Hardit Singh Malik, the former Ambassador to France, is seen inaugurating the 9th Annual Conference of the AISSF held on January 18, 1958, at Jullundur. S. Bharpur Singh, S. Jaswant Singh Phul, S. Parduman Singh Azad and others are seen sitting in the Conference.

maintain its independent and separate entity as per its traditions. He was elected as the President of the AISSF on January 18, 1958, at the Jullundur 9th Annual Conference, which was inaugurated by S. Hardit Singh Malik and presided over by S. Amar Singh Ambalvi. All the former Presidents except Bhai Harbans Lal attended that Conference in which it was resolved *inter alia* that religion and politics cannot be separated in Sikhism and that the regional Formula was no solution to the

Sikh problem as it offered "no adequate and effective safeguards to the Sikh minority against perpetual victimisation at the hands of the communalists." During his tenure, the 8th Annual Training Camp was held at Banga from 13th to 16th July, 1958, and he organised the 9th Central Training Camp at Delhi starting on May 24, 1959. When the Annual Session of the Federation took place at Amritsar on January 31 and February 1, 1959, a Committee was appointed to decide the unanimous choice of the President of the Federation and S. Ambalvi was appointed by the Committee as the arbitrator, who gave his verdict in favour of S. Phul and, thus, he continued as the President upto November 21, 1959. It will have to be mentioned that his re-election split the Organisation—



Dr. Manohar Singh M. D. S. (Orth) was the best cadet in the 9th Central Training Camp at Delhi and which commenced on May 24, 1959. He is being felicitated by the distinguished sympathisers of the Federation including S. Kashmira Singh, Bakshi Inderjit Singh, Principal Bal and Prof. Jaswant Singh Phul.

though temporarily—into two groups : one headed by S. Sarup Singh and other by S. Ambalvi. The former group gave its blessings to S. Parduman Singh Azad who had been heading the parallel Organisation till the election of S. Surjit Singh Minhas. S. Phul acted as the adviser to the Akali Dal and had the honour to be close to Master Ji. He has been working as a lecturer in Political Science in the Delhi University.

He worked as the Junior Vice-President of the Pheruman Akali Dal and was elected to the Delhi Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee on its ticket in 1975, while in 1977, he was elected as the member of the Delhi Metropolitan Council. He is scrupulously honest, basically Panthic and extremely hospitable.

S. SURJIT SINGH MINHAS

S. Surjit Singh Minhas was born at Calcutta, on December 14, 1935. S. Bhagat Singh Akali, a very renowned citizen of Calcutta, was his father. He qualified M. A., LL.B. and had been working as an organiser of the All India Sikh Students' Federation, Calcutta Circle, from 1949 to 1957. He shifted to Punjab in 1957, and started taking active part in Sikh politics. He was elected as the President of the Federation at the 11th Annual Conference of the AISSF held on November 21, 1959, at Ludhiana. The two-day programme of the 11th Annual Conference of AISSF was full of activities including two delegates' Sessions: Political Conference, Dharmic Conference and Kavi Darbar. His name was proposed by S. Jaswant Singh Phul and the formal announcement about the election was made by Dr. Santokh Singh, the President of the Session. He courted arrest in the Akali agitation and stayed in the Amritsar Jail from 14th August 1960 to 16th January, 1961. He worked as the General Secretary of the Gurdwara Doaba Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Jullundur, as a member of the Senate of Guru Nanak University in 1969, and was appointed as the Chairman of the Jullundur Improvement Trust w. e. f 14-8-1977 He was the Member of the Adampur Block Samiti. His main achievements had been to keep the bulletin going and to enrol hundreds of students as the members of the AISSF. Like other Presidents, he is an excellent orator and possesses refined manners and amiable nature.

THE PERIOD FROM S. MAKHAN SINGH TO S. HARI SINGH

S. Makhan Singh was elected as the President of the AISSF at the 12th Annual Session held at Jullundur, on February 2 and 3, 1963, and he continued to serve that office upto February 18, 1968. He was arrested in the 1960-61 Panjabi Suba Agitation and was lodged in the Ludhiana Jail. He is obliging and soft-spoken and is a Senior Manager in the Punjab and Sind Bank at Delhi. Professor Amrik Singh was also made the Federation's President by the rival section, however, he could not cut much ice. S. Surjit Singh Sandhu, a lecturer in Political Science, was elected as the President at a well-attended meeting held in the Chandigarh Panchayat Bhawan on February 18, 1968. On December 18,

1968, S. Jaswant Singh Mann was appointed as the acting President, while he was elected as the President of the Federation on July 20, 1969, at a function arranged in Master Tara Singh Memorial College for Women, Ludhiana. In 1971, there was a split which continued upto 1972, and during that period S. Jaswant Singh Grewal and S. Bir Devinder Singh organised the parallel Federations. From 1972 to 1974, was the period of inaction, nevertheless, a presidium consisting of Sardars Harsimran Singh, Gajinder Singh, Harvant Singh, Jagdish Singh and Amrik Singh did serve the Federation by holding meetings, demonstrations and circulating pamphlets and booklets. S. Jagmit Singh and S.



Former Presidents of the AISSF. L. to R. Prof. Jaswant Singh Phul, S. Makhan Singh, S. Bhan Singh and S. Surjit Singh Minhas.

Kulwant Singh Mangat also worked as the Presidents for some time, while S. Balwant Singh Ramuwalia (now M. P.) founded All India Sikh Students and Youth Federation. It is, of course, an unpleasant truth that after S. Surjit Singh Minhas, the Federation faded in its glory and revolved around a few persons, who felt contented in issuing press statements or arranging one or two meetings for getting the lectures from S. Kapur Singh delivered, so that they could make their presence felt. The field work in the schools and colleges was conspicuously missing and the Federation's leadership was cut off from the recruiting base. No effort was made to continue to publish the Sikh Students' Bulletin, however, a few mini Journals including *Tarkish* and *Jaddo jehad* were put into circulation, but they soon died off.

Eventually, S. Jagir Singh (now M. L. A.) was elected as the Federation's Chief on January 7, 1974, who made S. Hari Singh, a prominent youngman, as the Acting President of the Federation in 1977.*



Prof. Jagir Singh (extreme left) is seen with Principal Harbans Singh, Principal Shergill and S. Dilbir Singh. The picture relates to the occasion when Principal Shergill took the charge as Principal of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, from Principal Harbans Singh.

Professor Jagir Singh's era can be described as the period of Federation's revivalism.

Before concluding, it must be mentioned that youngmen namely: Sardars Gajinder Singh of Chandigarh, Harvant Singh, Jagdish Singh and Manjit Singh of Dera Bassi, Jaswant Singh Grewal of Ludhiana, Surjit Singh Hothi, Harjinder Singh Dilgir, Inder Pal Singh Walia, Gurbachan Singh Kalsi along with others suffered much in the cause of the Federation. Some of them were brutally beaten while raising Sikh Home Land Slogans and demonstrating against the emergency. S. Gajinder Singh's book '*Panj Tir*' was also banned and he was dismissed from the service. Obviously, they deserve the salutations. The message of S. Jaswant Singh Mann, the former President of the Federation, warrants attention :

*On July 2, 1978, S. Amrik Singh was elected as the Federation's President in the meeting held at Tagore Theatre, Chandigarh.

"Let the Young Khalsa know that those who stop every time a dog barks never reach the end of the road. The list of those communities who failed to perceive or failed to meet the challenge of time and went under is fairly long. It is the Young Khalsa who will have to decide what fate they take to be the best for their community. It is for you to decide whether after a few decades only stories and half-legends should remain to tell tales of the Sikhs or should the Glorious Panth of the Guru be maintained in its characteristic vigour. Being complacent will not do because any community which becomes complacent, by that fact alone forefeits its right to exist and earns the right to add another heap to the dust of bygone ages.



Late S. Rattan Singh Ambalvi, a great worker of the AISSF.

It is essential in the interest of an integrated Indian nation and mankind at large that the separate Personality of the Khalsa should be preserved. It is for this end that the Young Khalsa must strive with all the means at their command. The Khalsa must come up to the expectations of the Guru and must truly become, 'a sword in the Hand of God, a fit instrument of the Divine Will'. As the young men everywhere are rising to claim the world, so must you rise but with a loftier air and better mental-equipment. Nothing great, of course, is ever achieved by small men. Let the hopes of the Guru so fondly entertained of you be realized and, therefore, play the role assigned to you by Him in the present circumstances."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Interview with S. Sarup Singh.
2. S. Amar Singh Ambalvi resolved the conflict by pointing out that the work of the AISSF started in 1943, but the President was elected in 1944.
3. From Minority Politics in the Punjab' by Mr. Baldev Raj Nayar.
4. Out of the booklet 'Sikh Political Parties' by S. Harbans Singh, Editor of the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism.





S. Trilochan Singh *S. Dilbir Singh*

They did a yeoman's service for the success of the Chief Khalsa Diwan during their respective periods.

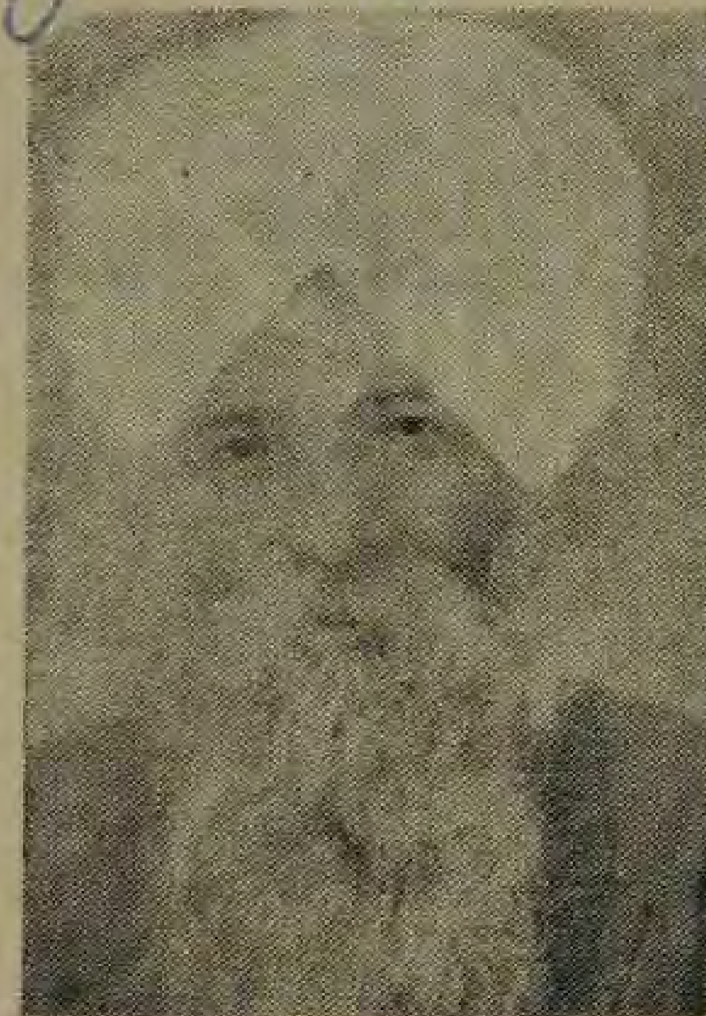


Picture relates to the AISSF camp held at Paonta Sahib in June 1974. Sardars Pritam Singh Oberai, Jagir Singh, Hari Singh, Gurmit Singh, Jagmit Singh, Harkawaljit Singh, Harmit Singh, Arshi Didar Singh, Bir Virinder Singh, Relph Singh (American Sikh) are seen in the picture.

1.	Guru Nanak	1469—1539
2.	Guru Angad	1539—1552
3.	Guru Amar Dass	1552—1574
4.	Guru Ramdas	1574—1581
5.	Guru Arjun	1581—1606
6.	Guru Hargobind	1606—1645
7.	Guru Har Rai	1645—1661
8.	Guru Har Krishan	1661—1664
9.	Guru Tegh Bahadur	1664—1675
10.	Guru Gobind Singh	1675—1708



Justice Jagjit Singh Bedi. He was appointed as one of the members of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwaras Board in 1971.



Giani Bishan Singh. He was the first Sikh Principal Khalsa College, Amritsar.



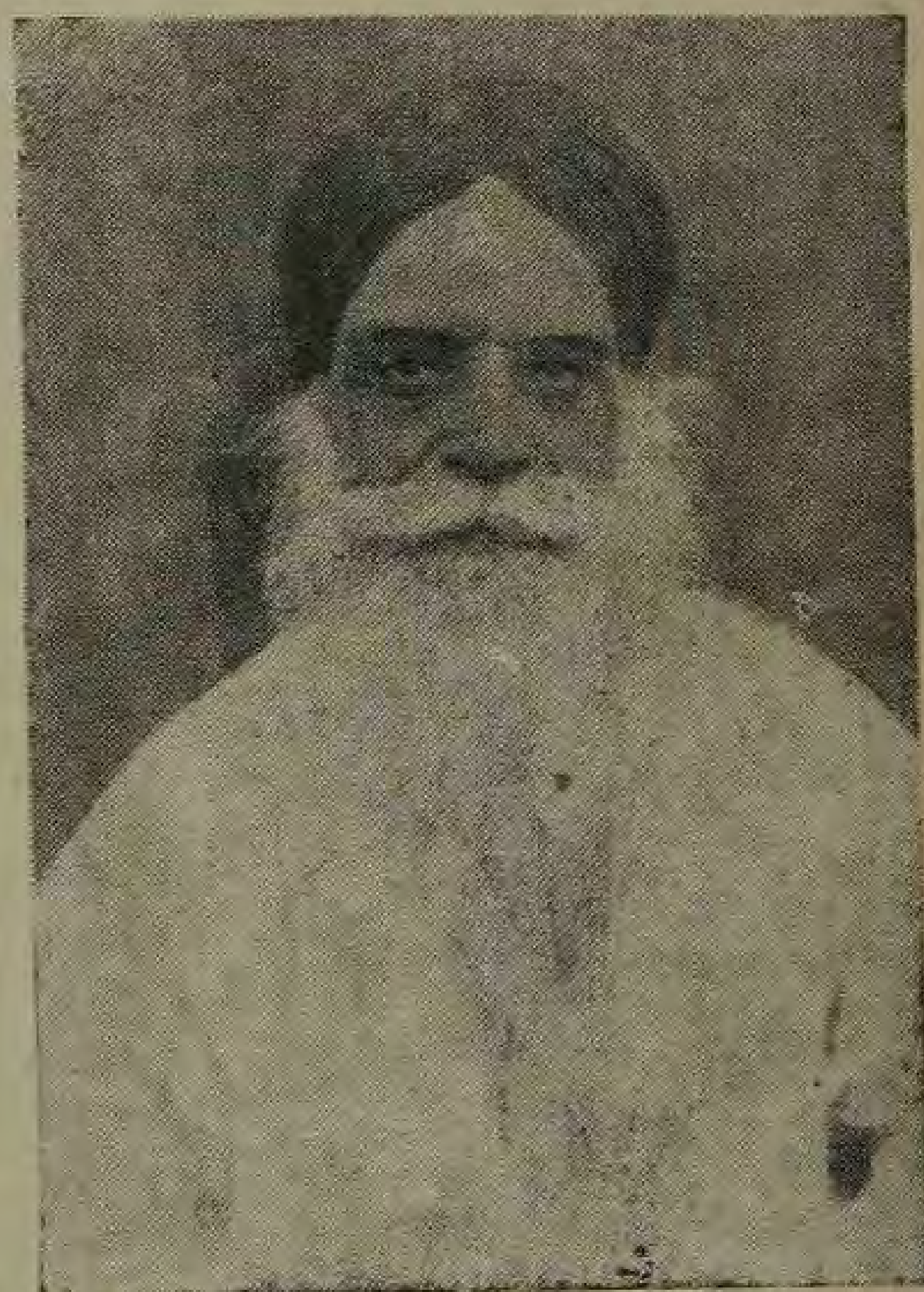
S Sobha Singh, a renowned artist, is seen flanked by Giani Bharpur Singh Secretary SGPC & Giani Gurbax Singh Secretary Dharam Parchar Committee SGPC.



S. Ajab Singh Daler, the Chief Editor of Vishav Akta, is known for his panthic views

Evolution of the Demand for Sikh Homeland.

"It may be your interest to be our masters
But how can be ours to be your slaves ?
(Thycidides)


Baba Kharak Singh, the first President of the SGPC, is popularly known as the 'Uncrowned king of the Sikhs'.

The word *Swaraj* was used for the first time in the All-India Congress Session held in Calcutta in 1906 and presided by Dadabhai Naroji, while in the All-India Surat Congress Session of 1907, the extremists and the moderates parted company from each other. In October 1908, the Secretary of State recommended that Muslims be granted separate electorates on the ground that the "Indian Mohammadans are much more than a religious body. They form in fact an absolutely separate community, distinct by marriage, food and custom, and claiming in many cases to belong to a different race from the Hindus." Lord Morley was at first opposed to the principle of separate electorates but ultimately gave in. In Minto-Morley Reforms, 1909, for the first time the effective principle (alongside nomination) was introduced to select representatives for the legislative bodies. With the introduction of the reforms which went under the joint name of the Governor General and the Secretary of State as the Minto-Morley reform scheme of 1909, the Muslims had succeeded in persuading the not-too-reluctant Minto (who in turn persuaded Morley) that the best way of getting proper Muslim representation was to have separate electorates, in which only Muslims could vote for Muslims and that the Muslims should be given "weightage" to offset the Hindu preponderance in numbers. The Chief Khalsa Diwan asked for similar concessions for the Sikhs. The Lieutenant Governor supported the Diwan and wrote to the viceroy that "in the Punjab the Sikh community is of the greatest importance and it should be considered

whether any and what measures are necessary to ensure its adequate representation.

No notice was taken of the Khalsa Diwan's representation nor of the Lieutenant Governor's recommendation. Under the Minto-Morley scheme, the Muslims were conceded separate representation and weightage in the states in which they were a minority as well as at the centre; similar privileges were extended to neither the Hindus nor the Sikhs of the Punjab. Consequently, in the elections that followed, the Sikhs were muscled out by the Muslims or the Hindus and the Lieutenant Governor had to complete the Sikh quota by nomination."1

Even in the Lucknow Pact of 1916, the Sikhs were never taken into confidence and the agreement between the representatives of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League related to the recognition of separate electorates as the basis of India's electoral system and of according weightage to the minorities in the provinces, in the light of which the Sikhs got only 20% representation in Punjab for their population of 13%. When Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State, visited India, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala and the other Sikh leaders represented that they deserved 1/3rd representation in the Punjab because of the services rendered by them in the war.

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report issued in 1918, made a reference to the case of the Sikhs and stated that the "Sikhs in the Punjab are a distinct and important people; they supply gallant and valuable element to the Indian army; but they are everywhere in a minority and experience has shown that they go virtually unrepresented. To the Sikhs, therefore, and to them alone we propose to extend the system already adopted in the case of Muhammadans..."*

"The Government of India Act of 1919 did not give the Sikhs the 33 percent that they had expected as a reward for their service rendered and their economic importance in the Punjab; in fact it gave them less in the Punjab than it gave to the Muslims in provices in which they (the Muslims) were a minority. Under the new constitution, the Punjab Legislative Council would comprise 93 members of whom 15 were to be Sikhs elected by Sikh constituents; the Central Assembly was to have 145 members, of whom three were to be Sikhs; the Council of States would have 60 members, of whom one was to be a Sikh."[2]

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*Montagu-Chemlsford Report.

In the elections held in 1920, the Unionist Party consisting of Muslim landlords and Hindu Jats of Haryana emerged as a force to be reckoned with. When All Parties' Conference met in Calcutta in the last week of December 1928, Mr. Jinnah wanted certain amendments to be incorporated in the Nehru Report, but the same were not accepted and Mr. Jinnah's group refused to participate in the Conference and eventually, Mr. Jinnah formulated '14-Points' for safeguarding the rights and interests of the Muslims in the future constitution.

S. Shivdev Singh Oberoi, President of the Chief Khalsa Diwan and member of the Council of States, S. Harbans Singh of Attari, Secretary, Chief Khalsa Diwan, S. Raghbir Singh Sandhawalia, S. Sunder Singh Majithia and S. Mohan Singh Rais of Rawalpindi submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission, which was sent by the British Government to India in 1927 for reviewing the working of the Government of India Act, 1919, and it read *inter alia*: "While anxious to maintain their individuality as a separate community they (the Sikhs) are always ready to cooperate with their sister communities for the development of a united nation. They would, therefore, be the first to welcome a declaration that no considerations of caste or religion shall affect the matter of organisation of a national government in the country. They are prepared to stand on merit alone, provided they, in common with others, are permitted to grow unhampered by any impediments, in the way of reservation for any other community......" According to the above representation, if the separate representation was to continue, the communal proportions in the Punjab Legislature should be: 40% Muslims; 30% Hindus and 30% Sikhs.

NEHRU COMMITTEE REPORT

The Indian National Congress tried to present the British Government with a draft constitution acceptable to the Indians, and for that matter, a conference of all important Indian Parties was invited at Lucknow on August 28, 1928, to consider the Nehru Committee Report. "Besides Mangal Singh, Master Tara Singh, Gopal Singh Qaumi, and Giani Sher Singh, some other Sikh leaders were also invited. All of them protested strongly against the recommendations made in the report. To accommodate the Sikh point of view, a pact was proposed between the Sikhs and the Congress. The proposal repeated the recommendations of the Nehru Report with minor changes. It provided joint electorates on the basis of adult franchise without reservation of seats for any community in Punjab, and stipulated that the formula be given a trial

for at least ten years after which, if necessary, a suitable amendment be made. But the formula did not find favour with Master Tara Singh, Giani Sher Singh and others. They argued that the Sikhs were an important minority. In order to give them weighted representation, 30 per cent of the seats in Punjab must be reserved for them.

Tej Bahadur Sapru, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad (1888-1958) and several others had long discussions with the Sikh leaders. In the end, the proposal was signed by the Punjab delegates including Mangal Singh. Though an enthusiastic Akali party worker, Mangal Singh, was also a member of the Nehru Committee. In obedience to party discipline he had signed the Nehru Committee Report without a minute of dissent and thus put the seal of Sikh assent on its recommendations. Master Tara Singh and Giani Sher Singh, however, appended strong minutes of dissent. They said :

1 We agree to support the Nehru Committee Report provided the method of election in Punjab is by proportional reservation.

2. We concede that adult suffrage is the most democratic principle but we feel that it is not practicable under the present circumstances, and is premature.

3. If, however, it is decided to introduce adult suffrage immediately, our expression of opinion as stated above may be noted. We presume that adult suffrage does not carry with recognition of any principle of communal representation directly or indirectly, to which we are strongly opposed " (3)

The Akali group led by Baba Kharak Singh was so much disgusted with the report that he completely cut off his connection with the Congress, while Master's group, though unhappy about it, decided to continue its association with the Indian National Congress.

THE FIRST ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

The First Round Table Conference opened in London in the month of November 1930. "The Sikh invitees (in addition to Bhupendra Singh of Patiala, who was invited as the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes) were Sampuran Singh and Ujjal Singh. The Akalis, the party that really mattered, consisted largely of *jathedars* incapable of grasping the niceties of constitutional practice; the Akalis tacitly acquiesced in the selection... The biggest hurdle was communal representation. Sikh delegates agreed to joint electorates with the reservation of seats for minorities, but they strongly opposed communal majorities based on separate electorates. The Muslims were unwilling to accept joint electorates on any terms.

Separate electorates won the day—not only for Muslims but also for Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, and the untouchables." (4)

The Sikh delegation demanded : "1. The Sikhs are anxious to secure a national government and are, therefore, opposed to any communal majority by statute or any reservation of seats by law for a majority community. 2. The Sikhs occupy an unrivalled position in Punjab as is reflected by their sacrifices in the defence of India and in the national movements and their stake in the province. They, therefore, demand 30 percent representation in the Punjab legislature and administration. 3. The Sikh community should have a one-third share in the Punjab cabinet and Punjab Service Commission. 4. If no arrangement is reached on the above basis, the boundaries of Punjab may be so altered by transferring the predominantly Mohammedan areas to the Frontier Provice as to produce a communal balance. In this reconstituted Punjab there should be joint electorates with no reservation of seats. 5. If neither of the above alternatives is acceptable, Punjab may be administered by the newly constituted responsible central government till a mutual agreement on the communal question is arrived at. 6. Punjabi should be the official language of the province. It should be optional for the Sikhs and others to use the Gurmukhi script, if they so desire. 7. The Sikhs should be given 5 percent of the total number of seats reserved for British India in each of the Upper and Lower Houses of the central legislature 8. There should always be at least one Sikh in the the central cabinet. 9. In case any army council is constituted the Sikhs should be adequately represented on it. 10. The Sikhs have always had a special connection with the army and, therefore, the same proportion of the Sikhs should be maintained in the army as before the war. 11. The Sikhs should have effective representation in all-India services and should be represented on the Central Public Service Commission. 12. All residuary powers should rest in the central government. 13. The central government should have special power to protect the minorities. 14. The Sikhs should have the same weightage in other provinces as is accorded to other minorities. 15. The provincial and central governments should declare religious neutrality and while maintaining the existing religious endowments, should not create new ones. 16. The government should provide for the teaching of the Gurmukhi script where a certain fixed number of scholars is forthcoming. 17. Any safeguards guaranteed in the constitution for the Sikhs should not be rescinded or modified without their express consent."

On March 5, 1931, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed and all the

political prisoners including Master Tara Singh arrested during the civil disobedience movement were released.

THE SECOND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

The Second Round Table Conference deliberated from September 17, 1931, to December 1, 1931. S. Ujjal Singh and S. Sampuran Singh represented the Sikhs. The widening cleavage between the Congress and the minorities particularly the Muslim League became quite evident and the minorities were emphatic for their claims being settled before any business was to be transacted. "Mr. Jinnah refused to give up separate electorates for the Muslims. On behalf of the Sikhs, Ujjal Singh reiterated their offer to accept joint electorates; but if separate representation was conceded to any community, particularly the Muslims, the Sikhs would insist on getting it as well.He added: "Unless the Communal question, which in the Punjab means the Muslim-Sikh question, is settled, it is not possible for the Sikhs to commit themselves to a federal scheme in which the Punjab would be an autonomous province."

"Ujjal Singh and Sampuran Singh demanded for the Sikhs 30 percent representation in the Punjab and 5 percent at the centre, with atleast one Sikh member in the central cabinet. Ujjal Singh presented as an alternative a scheme for a territorial readjustment of the Punjab. He proposed that the Rawalpindi and Multan divisions (excluding the Lyallpur and Montgomery districts) should be separated from the Punjab and attached to the North West Frontier Province, which would make the communal proportions in the Punjab 43.3 percent Muslims, 42.3 percent Hindu, and 14.4 percent Sikhs. In this Punjab, the Sikhs would not ask for any weightage, and would only ask for it in the North West Frontier Province and Sindh if the Muslims received it in other provinces. This eminently sensible and constructive proposal received scant consideration from the conference and was rejected along with a similar, but from the Sikh point of view less satisfactory, proposal by S. W. G. Corbett, to detach Ambala division from the Punjab and join it to the United Provinces.

In the absence of agreement among the Indian delegates, Ramsay MacDonald assumed the right to adjudicate on joint versus separate electorates and the proportions of communal representation. The Second Round Table Conference was a dismal failure."5 "The Government set up a minorities sub-committee to deal with communal representation. Its proceedings were deadlocked because of the Muslim refusal to accept joint citizenship with the rest of the nation.

Sampuran Singh told the sub-committee, of which he was a member, that "if Muslims were given a statutory permanent majority in the Punjab Legislature, there would be a Muslim government and with the mighty British Empire at their back there might be a civil war and we might be altogether annihilated and washed off the face of the earth." He added: "I do not say that there should not be a majority of any single community, but not to care for the other communities and to give this one single community a statutory majority is, I think, against all principles of constitutional law."

The Muslim delegates, presenting their case with calculated confidence, were not provoked. Sir Mohammad Shafi said :

"I confess I was pained as well as astonished at the language used by the responsible representative of our sister community, the Sikhs. I, for one, had hoped that the followers of that great saint Baba Guru Nanak who, when he died, was claimed by the Mussalmans as a Mussalman and by the Hindus as a Hindu, would find this table to be a uniting factor between Muslim and Hindu communities of Punjab."6

THE COMMUNAL AWARD

April 16 32

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime Minister, announced his communal award on April 16, 1932, and it related to the provincial legislatures. Through it, separate electorates for Muslims, Europeans, Sikhs, Indian Christians and Anglo-Indians were accorded. The Sikhs who formed 13.2 percent of the population were given only 32 seats in the house of 175, while they had failed to get anything in U. P. and Sind, where they had a sizeable population. The Sikh leaders strongly criticised the above award and they withdrew from the conference as a protest. "The award conceded the communal demands of the Muslims, as embodied in Jinnah's fourteen points. The Muslims were given separate electorates with reservation of seats in provincial legislatures; and the proposed autonomy for the provinces envisaged a weak central set-up, which was precisely what they wanted......In 1932 when the British allocated seats through the Communal Award, the result was the establishment of a statutory majority for the Muslims in the Punjab legislature. The Sikhs received a representation of 19 per cent. The Akali Dal, which by this time had become a major force in Sikh politics, was dissatisfied with this arrangement. It began agitating for a solution that would give the Sikhs increased representation and at the same time reduce the Muslim majority in the legislature. During the 1930, the Akali Dal strongly opposed not only the Muslim League which

vowedly stood for Muslim interests, but also the Unionist Party, which it thought was promoting primarily Muslim interests under the cover of a secular economic programme oriented towards the rural areas. It was bitterly critical of any Sikh who associated himself with the Unionist Party."7

THE THIRD ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

In order to ponder over the reports of the committees, which were constituted before the Third Round Table Conference was called in the month of November 1932, 46 delegates attended it and it was stated by the Secretary of State that the Muslims were to be given 33⅓% of British Indian States. It was also announced that a separate State, Sindh, was to be consituted making it to be a predominantly Muslim province. "The Sikh nominee, Tara Singh of Ferozepur, protested against provincial autonomy under a permanent and dominant Muslim majority in the Punjab. He supported safeguards which would provide that measures affecting minorities should not be passed without the consent of three-fifths of the community concerned and be subject to the veto of the Governor. He pleaded for weightage in services, a 5 per cent representation in the Federal Legislature, and Sikh representation in Sindh."8 No important Ruler attended and the interest as well as enthusiasm for federation stood lost.

THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1935

Through the Government of India Act, 1935, which became law on August 4, 1935, Dyarchy, which was abolished in the provinces, was introduced in the centre. "The Indian National Congress rejected the Government of India Act, 1935, because of the powers of intervention given to governors in the provinces and the dyarchy in the centre. It resolved to capture power and then destroy the constitution. The Muslim League followed suit but reserved the right to try out the provincial scheme" for what it was worth." The princes who had shown such alacrity in accepting federation got cold feet when they realised it would mean surrendering some of their "sovereignty". Sikh political parties had already condemned the communal award; they added their voice to the chorus of denunciation. For all practical purposes, the Government of India Act of 1935 was a still-born child.

The first elections under the new Act were held in the winter of 1936-37. The Sikhs had the choice of backing either the Congress or the Unionists. They rejected both: the Congress because of its predominantly anti-Sikh Arya Samaj leadership; the Unionists because,

despite their championing the cause of the agriculturists (which found favour in the eyes of Sikh agriculturists). their primary interest was the Mussulman Jat; the Sikh and Hindu Jat was of secondary importance. They could have formed alliances with one or the other political party, but none of the leaders had the foresight or the following to do so. Instead they split their forces into the Akali and the anti-Akali group (known as the Khalsa National Party),* both of minor importance in provincial affairs and of none whatsoever on the national scene."9

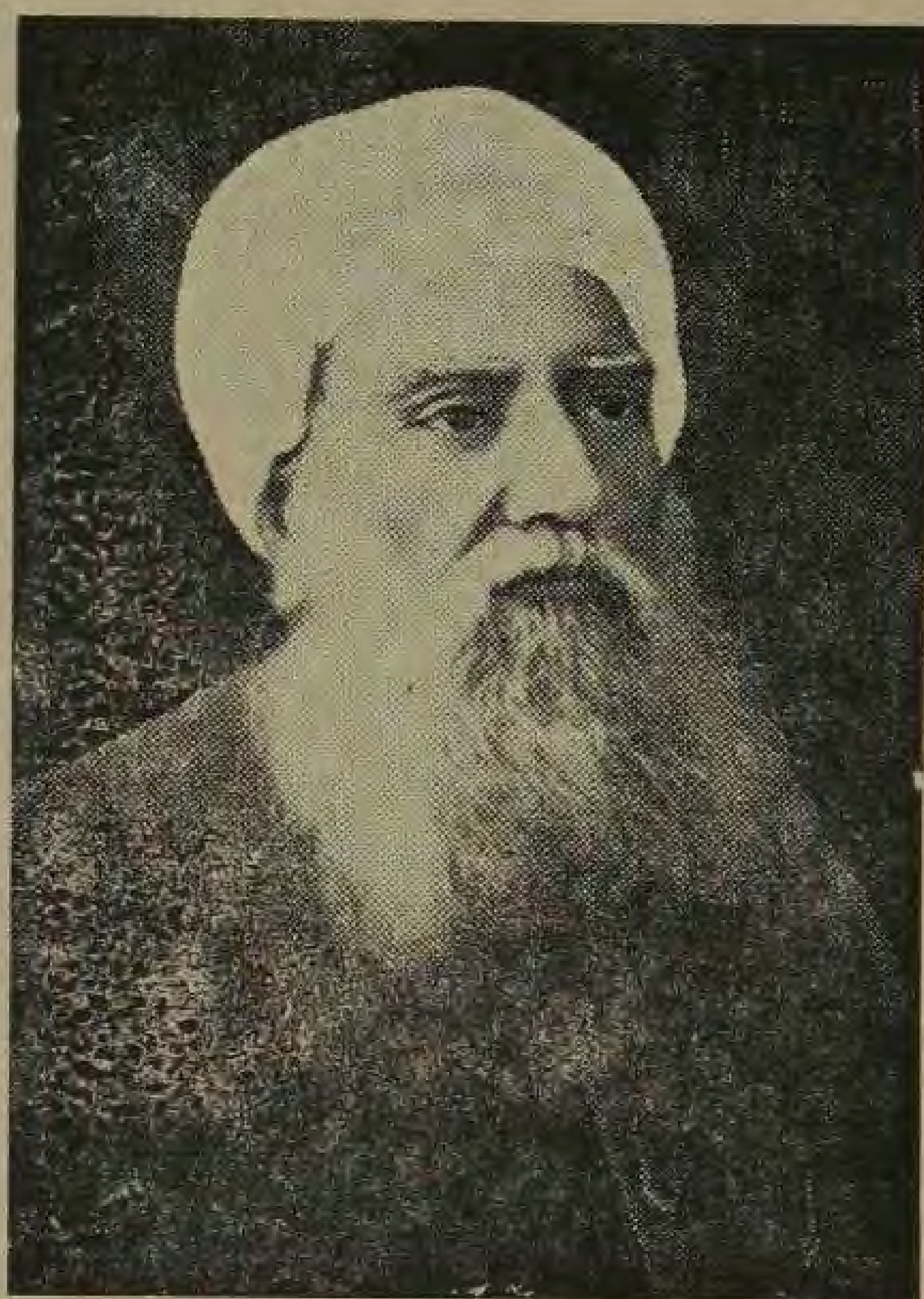
The Unionist Party had a clear-cut majority in the 1937 elections to the Punjab Assembly, while the Congress performance was the poorest as it could muster 10% of the votes. Out of the total 175 seats, the Khalsa Nationalist Party, the Unionists and the Muslim League got 15, 96 and 2 seats respectively and the remaining were shared by the other parties including the Congress and Communists. Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan's ministry consisted of 3 Muslims, 2 Hindus and 1 Sikh, namely: S. Sunder Singh Majithia. Within a short span of one year of their coming into power, the Unionists became very close to the Muslim League and Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan was invited to the Lucknow Session of the All-India Muslim League where Mr. Jinnah and the Punjab Premier had a meeting on October 15, 1937, resulting into Sikandar-Jinnah Pact and the Sikhs sharply reacted to that development.

In November 1938, a conference was held under the presidentship of S. Baldev Singh at Rawalpindi where Congress and Akali flags were flown side by side and it was resolved that the Sikhs should join the Congress. The speeches were made against the Unionist Party for its repressive policies. S. Baldev Singh in his presidential address stated *inter alia* that "Next to my duty towards God and my great Gurus, I sincerely believe that it is my duty to obey the mandate of the Congress, and I hold that the Congress mandate is binding upon me. This I do, not because of personal considerations, but as I consider the Congress to be the trustee of our national honour and national self-respect and the only national organisation that has done more for the liberation of our mother country and the emancipation of the poor masses than any other organisation."(10) The collaboration between the Congress and Akalis continued till the Second World War. When Hitler declared war on Poland on September 1, 1939, Lord Lintithgow, the crown representative in India, pleaded for whole-hearted co-operation of the Indian parties.

*It was organized by S. Sunder Singh Majithia and S. Jogider Singh, around whom all anti-Akali and pro—British elements gathered.

The Akalis supported the British in the war efforts and got as many Sikhs recruited in the army as was possible under the circumstances. More than 500 Sikhs assembled at Amritsar under the presidentship of Master Tara Singh and offered to cooperate with the British Government in the war efforts provided justice and fair play were granted to the Sikhs (see Statesman dated 2-10-39). The cooperation, the Sikhs extended to the war efforts resulted in the formation of Sikh League. The Khalsa Defence League convened all parties Sikh Conference at Lahore on 20-1-41, calling upon the Sikhs to join the army in large numbers. The relations between the Sikhs and the British stood temporarily strained because of the sensational incident which took place in April 1940, when the Sikh squadron refused to go to the Middle East, but because of the tactful handling of Major Bill Short, a great admirer of the Sikhs and who always said, "Settle the Sikhs and you settle India", the differences stood amicably settled.

The death of Sir Sunder Singh Majithia, a Punjab Minister, in 1940, brought the end of all the political activities of Khalsa National Party and Chief Khalsa Diwan. "Dasaundha Singh, a man of no political standing and of average acumen, was selected to succeed Sir Sunder Singh in the cabinet in preference to Ujjal Singh, a lieutenant of Sir Sunder Singh and an able parliamentarian. The main reason for ignoring Ujjal Singh was that he was a non-Jat." (11) S. Baldev Singh seized the the opportunity by the forelock and he formed a new Sikh Party in the Legislature in March 1942. The main objective of the Akali Dal in those days was that in no case the demand for Pakistan should materialise, therefore, they were for an alliance between them and the Unionists so that it could block the creation of Pakistan and in the light of that background, Sikander Baldev Singh pact was arrived at on June 15, 1942. The terms of that agreement were embodied in a letter addressed by Sir Sikander to S. Baldev Singh, and it related to *Jahatka* meat, teaching of



S. Sundar Singh Majithia, with whose death, "the political importance and influence of the National Khalsa Party and the Chief Khalsa Diwan almost came to an end."

Gurmukhi, legislation regarding religious matters, Sikh recruitment to the government services and representation at the Centre. Because of the above pact, S. Jogindera Singh was taken as a Sikh member when the Viceroy expanded his executive council. On December 26, 1943, Sir Sikander died and by that time, all the eleven members of Khalsa National Party had joined the Party led by S. Baldev Singh.

DEMAND FOR A SOVEREIGN MUSLIM STATE MADE BY THE MUSLIM LEAGUE.

In March 1940, the Annual Conference of the Muslim League was held at Lahore and it demanded a sovereign Muslim State and declared that the Muslims constituted a separate nation and the areas where they were in majority be constituted into Pakistan. The Sikhs' opposition to the Pakistan demand was understandable because Sikhs were in an overwhelming majority in the areas which were sought to be brought in Pakistan. The All-India Akali Conference held at Attari in 1940, decided to oppose the demand for Pakistan to the tooth. The Sikhs had two options : either they could resist the demand for Pakistan by closely associating themselves with the Congress or to have a State of their own.

KHALISTAN DEMANDED.

One Dr. V. S. Bhatti belonging to Ludhiana issued a pamphlet demanding Khalistan, which was to be a buffer State between India and Pakistan and according to his conception, Khalistan was to include Sikh majority districts of Punjab, Sikh princely States of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot and Kalsia as well as the non-Sikh princely States like Simla Hill State and Malerkotla. So far the Punjab districts were concerned, he wanted Ludhiana, Ferozepore, Jullundur, Ambala, Lahore, Amritsar, Lyallpur, Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, Montgomery, Hissar, Rohtak and Karnal. Maharaja Patiala, according to his views, was to be the head while the cabinet was to include the representatives of the federating units.*

S. Sadhu Swarup Singh wrote a popular booklet 'THE SIKHS DEMAND THEIR HOMELAND' in which he addressed to the top-ranking representatives of his Britainic Majesty in the following words :

" You have been telling us all along and rightly too that India is the home of many peoples and Indian unity is a fiction in the face of strik-

*See 'Akalis : Past and Present.'

ing sharp and deep divisions and differences. Your description of India being faithful and not distorted by personal motives was accepted as correct. But could you or would you make a volte-face and say you are a recent convert to the Gandhian doctrine of Indian Unity. If you do not evolve a solution reconciling the contests of all the peoples you will be instrumental in making room for another imperialism viz. the Hindu hegemony. Again conceding Mr. Jinnah's demand for a separate Muslim State without giving a political home to the Sikhs in the Punjab, would mean selling the owners and makers of the province to the Muslim tenant.

The Sikh nation whose culture, manliness, valour and industry you so often praised and admired, will suffer slow extinction unless granted political existence. In fact in asking for a Sikh State, we don't make a new demand. We only ask for the return of our homeland, our holyland. The last power that fell to your predatory mission of the 19th century in India was our independent kingdom in the Punjab. If you have decided to unwrite the black pages of Anglo-Indian history, why not begin with the return of the Punjab to the hands from which you snatched, not with superior might but with superior guile ; to the hands who were not only its owners but also its shapers.

How are you going to return your gratitude for our blood spilt against the political gangsters of Europe as well as of Japan ? Certainly not by condemning us to political slavery of the Muslims.

The author of ' The Akalis : Past and Present' referred to the reports published in the Tribune dated 21 and 29 May of 1940, and stated : In response to an invitation by Sikh leaders like Baba Gurdit Singh, Ranjodh Singh Tarsikha, Jagjit Singh, editor of Khalsa Sewak, and several others, about 120 representatives of Sikh organisations of Amritsar district assembled at Amritsar on 19 May, 1940, to discuss the Khalistan Scheme. The conference stretched the concept of Khalistan to include the territory from Jammu to Jamrud which the late Maharaja Dalip Singh had given as *amanat* (trust) to the British. A 21 – member sub-committee with power to co-opt ten more was formed to launch a propaganda campaign for Guru Khalsa Raj. Another conference was called on 24 May, at Jagraon where the Sikhs of the Malwa region reiterated the demand for Khalistan in case Pakistan was accepted by the British Government.

ARRIVAL OF THE CRIPPS MISSION ON MARCH 22, 1942

Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in Delhi on March 22, 1942, armed with the British Government's declaration on the basis of which India was

to be given independence. He brought a draft proposal with the object of forming a new Indian Union with dominion status and it conceded the right to any province to leave the Union and "the right of non-acceding provinces to agree upon a new constit ution of their own with a status equal to that of Indian Union". According to the proposal, the partition of the country was and could be the only solution left with the British Government. A Sikh deputation consisting of Master Tara Singh, S. Baldev Singh, S. Joginder Singh and S. Ujjal Singh met Sir Stafford on



L to R : S. Baldev Singh, Sir Cripps, Master Tara Singh, S. Jogindera Singh and S. Ujjal Singh. The Sikh delegates with the Cripps Mission on March 31, 1942.

March 31, 1942, and represented that the Sikh community had been lamentably betrayed because it was unjust to allow the extraneous trans-Jhelum population, which only accidently came to the province to dominate the Punjab proper...The population of the Sikh states of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Kapurthala and Faridkot, which was about twenty-five lakhs, had only 20% Muslims, while the population of the Muslims, in the other area from Delhi to the banks of the Ravi was only 45,05,000 out of a total of 12, 115,100, and if the two were combined, the ratio of the Muslim population would go down still further." (12)

In a letter dated March 31, 1942, addressed to the Sir Cripps, Master stated that the Sikhs "have lost all hope of receiving any consideration. We shall, however, resist by all possible means separation of

the Punjab from an all India Union." The Sikh started pinning their hopes in the Congress which was, at that time, opposed to the division of the country. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, a widely respected man, felt the pulse of the situation and declared that the demand put up by the Muslim League for a separate state should be conceded, however, he was bitterly opposed by the Congress and, ultimately, the Congress Working Committe forced him to resign.

The Indian National Congress launched "Quit India" movement in 1942, calling upon the English to leave the country. The Muslim League invented a new slogan: 'Divide and Quit' in the All-India Muslim League Session held in Karachi in December, 1943, where it was resolved to establish 'Committee of Action' to organise Muslims for resisting constitution of a unitary type and to be prepared for launching the struggle for the attainment of Pakistan. On the other hand, the All-India Hindu Maha Sabha passed a resolution demanding the preservation of the integrity of India and the refusal of the right to secede. S. Khushwant Singh beautifully analysed the position of the Sikhs : "The Sikhs found themselves in a tricky situation. They were faced with two rival freedom movements : one led by the National Congress for the freedom of the country as a whole ; the other led by the Muslim League for an indepen-



S. Khushwant Singh, a renowned Sikh historian, sitting with Master Tara Singh, who is being interviewed by a foreign Correspondent S. Hardev Singh, Advocate of Rajpura, is also seen in the picture.

dent Muslim state involving a division of the country which would inevitably cut across the land in which the Sikhs lived. Congress leaders, much as they desired to have the Sikhs on their side, were unwilling to concede to them the privileges they enjoyed under British rule. On the contrary, in

the shape of things envisaged by the nationalists, separate electorates and privileges based on race or religion were to be abolished. The League promised little ; and even in that little the Sikhs placed no faith. What course of action could the Sikhs follow? Obtain the best terms they could from the Congress and support a free, united India ? Exploit Congress-League differences and extract concessions from both? Or, ignore both the Congress and the League and strive for an autonomous state of their own ? Some politicians advocated one line of policy ; others the absolute opposite. Events began to move so fast that they had little time to sit back, take stock of the situation, and then present a united front of Sikh political opinion."

AZAD PUNJAB DEMAND

The arguments which were used by Mr. Jinnah for establishing Pakistan were pressed into service by the Sikhs for their Azad Punjab Demand. The Sikhs considered the Cripps proposals as the most undesirable, therefore, the Azad Punjab Scheme was expounded as an alternative to the above proposals and the scheme aimed at re-adjusting the boundaries in such a way that neither Hindus, Muslims nor Sikh constituted an absolute majority. For doing so, the questions of populations, property, land revenue and historical traditions of each of the communities were to be kept into consideration. Azad Punjab was to comprise "Ambala, Jullundur, Lahore divisions and out of Multan division Lyallpur district, some portion of Montgomery and Multan districts." "Accordingly, the districts of Rawalpindi and Multan divisions, namely Attock, Mianwali, Shahpur, Jhelum, Gujrat, Multan, Dehra Ghazi Khan, Muzzafargarh, and Jhang, besides the territory, now comprising Baluchistan, were to form a Muslim majority province to be enlarged, if necessary, by the inclusion of the North-West Frontier Province which had a 90 percent Muslim majority. This gave the Muslims a state of their own in the north-west though a considerably smaller one than the one outlined by Iqbal in his celebrated presidential address to the Allahabad session of the All India Muslim League in 1930. The other Punjab districts were to comprise a new province by the name of Azad Punjab.

A glaring snag in the scheme lay in the inclusion in the proposed Azad Punjab of the three predominantly Muslim districts of Sheikhupura, Gujranwala and Sialkot of Lahore divisions besides Lyallpur, in which the Muslim majority ranged from 60 to 70 percent. Even in Montgomery, Ferozepore, Lahore, Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Jullundur districts the Muslim population, according to the 1931 census, the last census of the undivided Punjab, varied from 40 to 59 percent. Ludhiana, Hoshiarpur,

Kangra and the districts of Ambala division alone were preponderantly non-Muslim areas. It was on them that the authors of "Azad Punjab" rested their hope and aspirations for redressing the balance in favour of the Sikhs". (13)

RAJAGOPALACHARI'S FORMULA

The Rajagopalachari formula provided that "after the termination of war, a commission shall be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the north-west and east of India, wherein the Muslim population is in absolute majority. In the areas thus demarcated, a plebiscite of all the inhabitants, held on the basis of adult sufferage or other practicable franchise, shall ultimately decide the issue of separation from Hindustan. If the majority decides in favour of forming a sovereign state separate from Hindustan, such a decision shall be given effect to without prejudice to the right of districts on the border to choose to join either state."

The above formula came like a bolt from the blue and the Azad Punjab Demand stood converted into Khalistan. In the 5th Annual Session of All India Akali Conference held at Lahore on October 14, 1944, under the presidentship of S. Pritam Singh Gojran, the resolution for the creation of an independent Sikh State was moved by Master Tara Singh and the Conference rejected the Gandhi-Rajaji formula conceding the Pakistan demand as a "sinful act". The Sikh Homeland demand was fully supported by the Communist Party and it conceded the right of self-determination for the nationalities to decide for themselves the way to be chosen. The strategy of the Communist Party was to win the support of the Sikhs on the eve of the 1945 –46 elections, however, the expulsion of the Communists from the Congress enabled the Akalis to have their influence percolated and penetrated among the Sikh masses so much so the in the 1946—elections, the Communists could not get even a single seat in the Punjab Assembly and to quote the words of S. Khushwant Singh : "It was an Akali triumph with the aid of the Congress truncheon."

THE SIMLA CONFERENCE

On 8-6-1943, Lord Wavel became the new Viceroy and he invited the Indian leaders to Simla for talks on the basis of the proposals which stood crystalized after he met the Secretary of State, the India Committee and the cabinet on his visit to London on March 23, 1945.

The Conference assembled in the Viceregal Lodge Simla, at 11.00 a.m. on June 25, 1945. 21 persons were invited and among others, it in-

cluded Master Tara Singh, who represented the Sikhs. "Master Tara Singh (Sikhs) said that he approved the proposals in general, but that everything would depend on the spirit in which these were worked ; that



(Lord Wavel speaking to Pt. Moti Lal, while Master Tara Singh is seen talking to Mr. Jinnah before the Session of the Simla Conference.

L to R : V. P. Menon, Sir Evan Jenkins, Lord Wavell, Lady Wavell, Moti Lal, P. N. Banerje, N. Sivaraj, Tara Singh, Jinnah and Hossain Imam.

by coming together the parties might in the end drift further apart. The Sikhs did not identify themselves with the Congress, though in so far as the Congress favoured India's freedom they were in the sympathy with it. He thought the future of the Indian army needed careful consideration. It had its own history and traditions, and new ideas about it might injure people who had served the country well... Master Tara Singh suggested that the differences between the Congress and Muslim League should be put to arbitration ; he was quite prepared to agree to Pakistan if Jinnah on his part would agree to a separate State for the Sikhs. Pakistan was a far greater danger to the Sikhs than to the other communities. The Conference at Simla had been conceived as a gathering of politically eminent persons who would sit together and collectively advise the Viceroy about the formation of a new central Government. The Simla Conference afforded a last opportunity to the forces of nationalism to fight a rear-guard action to preserve the integrity of the country, and when the battle was lost, the waves of communalism quickly

engulfed it. Only the Hobson's Choice of partition was left." (14) The leaders of the Unionist Party faded in glory before Mr. Jinnah who stole the lime-light. In his book "*Meri Yadan*" Master Tara Singh referred to the talk, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the then Congress President, had with him. According to Master, the Maulana wanted him to leave the representation of the Sikhs in the hands of the Congress but Master ji replied, "You will be given full cooperation on behalf of the Sikhs but if the representation is left to the Congress, misunderstandings are likely to develop." Master Ji concluded that the Conference failed as Mr. Jinnah was bent upon to get the country partitioned. "Master Tara Singh was, however happy that the Sikhs had been recognised as one of the four elements of national life whose consent was necessary for framing any constitution. From this he naively concluded that Pakistan was an impossibility unless the Sikhs agreed to it. The Akali leader wanted the Muslims to realise that just as they could not submit to Hindu domination in India, the Sikhs could not submit to Muslim domination in Punjab and as such they (Muslims) had to make efforts to win their goodwill.

Master Tara Singh declared that while he was opposed to the demand for Pakistan, he would demand establishment of an independent Sikh State if this demand was conceded. The proposed Sikh state would be in central Punjab, including Lahore and Amritsar districts, where the Sikhs had their holy places. To the objection that the Sikhs were in minority in central Punjab, Master Tara Singh said that he was basing his demand on the analogy of Palestine, which had been declared a Jewish homeland even though the Jews formed only 10 percent of the population." (15)

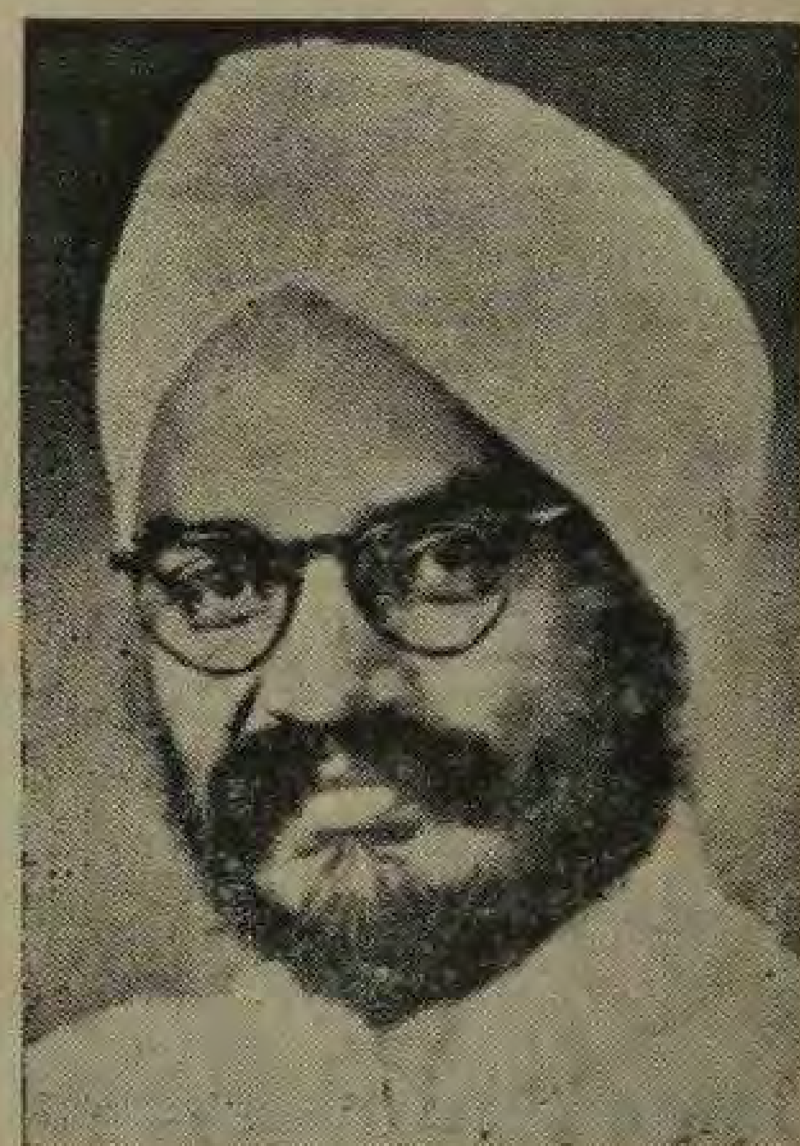
1945-ELECTIONS TO THE CENTRAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The elections to the Central Legislative Assembly were held in 1945, and the Congress had a roaring success in the general constituencies, while the Muslim League won every Muslim seat leaving the Nationalist Muslims far behind. The final result was : Congress 57; Muslim League 30; Independents 5; Akali Dal 2; and Europeans 8.

1946-ELECTIONS TO THE PUNJAB LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

In 1945, Babu Labh Singh was elected as the president of the Akali Dal and during his time, the Congress and Akalis stood poles apart. The elections were held in the month of January and unlike the 1937-elections, the 1946-elections were fought by the Congress and Akalis on different

platforms. After the elections, the partywise position in the 175-member Punjab Assembly was : Congress 51; Muslim League 74; Unionists 21; Akalis 23; Anglo Indians 2; and Independent Christian 1; Independent Labour 2; and Independent Harijan 1. Although the Muslim League emerged as the largest single party and the Unionists stood routed, the League could not make its ministry unless it could muster the support of at least 14 other members. The Congress, Unionists and the Akalis succeeded in forming a coalition ministry with Sir Khizr Hayat Khan as the head, thus, a predominantly non-Muslim government was in power. The coalition further got strength from the pact reached between Mr. Sachar and S. Swaran Singh on behalf of their respective parties and the terms of the pact were that (a) whenever a cabinet vacancy occured by death, resignation or otherwise, the vacated seat shall go to the nominee of the same party which represented that seat ; (b) each party would call upon its petitioners to withdraw their election petitions; and (c) in a by-election, the two parties would support any candidate put up as a result of an agreement.



S. Swaran Singh

CABINET MISSION

At the close of 1945, Indo-British relations became very cordial because the Allies came out successful in the Second World War and the Labour Party in Britain formed for the first time its government with an absolute majority in the House of Commons. On February 19, 1946, the British Prime Minister announced that his government was to send a special mission to India so that the possibility of giving freedom to India as early as possible could be explored. The above mission known as the Cabinet Mission arrived in Delhi on March 24, 1946, and it interviewed 472 Indian leaders at 182 sittings. The Congress, the Muslim League and the Sikhs apart from other parties and groups represented their respective cases. The Conference opened on May 5, 1946, and all the parties made their respective preliminary statements after a short address by Lord Pathick-Lawrence. "The case of the Sikh community was presented by Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh and Harnam Singh, as well as by Baldev Singh. The first three were interviewed together, though each had his own individual views to put forward. The Mission wished particularly to know whether, if it were given the choice, the Sikh community

would prefer the transfer of power to a single body, or to more than one body, if power were to be transferred to two bodies, which of them would the Sikh community wish to join; and if such a thing were practicable and could be arranged, would the Sikhs wish to have a separate autonomous State of their own ?

Master Tara Singh said that he stood for a united India and for some sort of coalition government of all communities. The Hindus and Muslims were not united and would remain antagonistic for some time; in that situation the Sikhs in a united India would have a degree of bargaining power. If India were divided the Sikhs would come under the majority of one community or the other; in that case, they would prefer a separate independent Sikh State with the right to federate either with Hindustan or Pakistan.

Giani Kartar Singh said that the Sikhs would feel unsafe in either a united India or in Pakistan. They should have a province of their own where they would be in a dominant or almost dominant position. In reply to Sir Stafford Cripps, who asked what would be the area of the proposed Sikh State, Giani Kartar Singh suggested that it should be the whole of the Jullundur and Lahore divisions, together with the Hissar, Karnal, Ambala and Simla districts of the Ambala Division and the Montgomery and Lyallpur districts.

Harnam Singh was opposed to the partition of India. Such a step, he said, would be against the wishes of the Sikh community. A divided India would be a prey to foreign invasion and there could be no safeguard except in an independent Sikh State. He advocated an increased representation of Sikhs in the proposed constitution-making body and pleaded for a separate one for Sikhs if there were to be more than one constitution-making body.

Baldev Singh, who was a minister in the Punjab Govt. at the time, was interviewed separately. He gave a brief description of the manner in which the position of the Sikh community had deteriorated since 1914 and how impossible it would be for it to exist unless it were given special protection. Sir Stafford Cripps asked specifically how 'Khalistan' could be formed, to which Baldev Singh replied that it would be the Punjab, excluding the Multan and Rawalpindi divisions, with an approximate boundary along the Chenab river. An area comprising the Ambala division, the Jullundur division and the Lahore divisions was the smallest and could be contemplated. But the Sikhs strongly favoured a united India ; they considered the division unwise because the small States on

the frontier would be at the mercy of great powers and so be a source of danger to India. In Baldev Singh's view the best solution was a united India, with safeguards for minorities in the form of weighted communal proportions in the legislatures. Questioned as to the nature of the safeguards which he would regard as adequate, Baldev Singh said that in some of the British-Indian provinces, e. g. Bombay, weightage was given to Muslims as against the Hindus. If, in the Punjab legislature, the Muslims were content to have forty-five percent of the seats instead of fifty one percent, and the balance were to be divided between the Hindus and the Sikhs, then Sikh interests could be protected. The Sikhs were considerably disturbed by the Cabinet Mission's proposals which they felt, would leave them without sufficient safeguards against a Muslim majority in the Punjab and in the north-west group. The Akali leader, Master Tara Singh, said that under the proposed constitutional set-up the Sikhs were doomed. At a representative conference of Sikhs held at Amritsar on 10 June, the Cabinet Mission's proposals were rejected. Master Tara Singh and some other Sikh leaders declared their determination to fight the Mission's plan " (16)

SIKH MEMORANDUM PRESENTED BY MASTER TARA SINGH TO THE CABINET MISSION (1946)

The Sikh Memorandum submitted before the Cabinet Mission by Master Tara Singh read : The position of the minorities has changed since the Cripps Mission. As conceded by Mr. Attlee, Indians cannot be made responsible for governing themselves and at the same time power retained in the hands of an authority outside India for intervention on behalf of such minorities for ensuring their proper treatment by the majority. This makes it all the more necessary for the Sikhs to safeguard in the constitution itself their political status in the future policy of the country.

The draft declaration provides for the right of non-accession of provinces. The Sikhs make it plain that they are opposed to any possible partition of India as envisaged in the draft declaration. The Sikhs form a compact cultural nationality of about six millions. They further maintain that, judged by any definition or test, the Punjab is not only their homeland, ~~but also~~ holy land. They were the last rulers of the Punjab and before the advent of the British they enjoyed in the Punjab independent economic and political status...They wish, however, to point out, that with the inauguration of provincial autonomy on the basis of the Communal Award, they have been reduced to a state of complete helplessness. If the existing provincial political set-up is contiuued, the

transference of power to the people would perpetuate the coercion of the Sikhs under what in practice has come to be the Muslim rule. That set-up is unjust to the Sikhs. Its working has meant Muslim communal rule in the Punjab which has almost exasperated the Sikhs to the point of revolutionary protest. The intervention of war conditions has been responsible for the Sikhs acquiescing in temporarily in this communal tyranny. They cannot be expected to submit to it as a permanent arrangement in any new scheme of Indian polity."

AKALI DEMANDS

The statutory Muslim majority in the legislature of the province must go and the position of the Sikhs must be strengthened by increased representation therein so as to ensure to the Sikhs an effective voice in the administration of the country.

In the alternative, out of the existing province of the Punjab a new province may be carved out as an additional provincial unit in the united India of the future in such a way that all important Sikh gurdwaras and shrines may be included in it as also a substantial majority of the Sikh population in the existing province of the Punjab.

The Sikhs cannot, however, blind themselves to the fact that the Muslims have declared that they are a separate nation as distinct from the Sikhs, the Hindus and others, and that on that basis they are entitled to Pakistan. We have already expressed unequivocally our opposition to the establishment of such a state. In view of the rumours that are current we are obliged to take note of the possibility of the Cabinet Mission giving serious consideration to the Muslim League claim.

Before the Mission arrives at the decision on this question we would emphasise that the Sikhs have as good a claim for the establishment of a separate sovereign Sikh state as the Muslims for Pakistan and that the Mission should not concede the claim for Pakistan without conceding at the same time the claim for a separate state made on behalf of the Sikhs. The Sikhs are in favour of a single constitution-making body in which they should be represented as already indicated above.

In case the Mission should think of taking into serious consideration the proposal that has been made for two constitution-making bodies, one for Pakistan and the other for the rest of India, we make our position clear that there should also be a separate constitution-making body for a Sikh state."(7)

"The Sikh delegation was united in its opposition to Pakistan. The delegates marshalled all the arguments they could to impress the Cabinet Mission of the utter impossibility of the Sikhs either living in a Muslim state or having territory inhabited by them handed over to the Muslims. The Sikh spokesman, Master Tara Singh, said that he was for a separate Sikh State with the right to federate either with India or Pakistan. Gyani Kartar Singh elaborated the latter alternative as a "province of their (Sikhs) own where they would be in a dominant, or almost dominant position"; this province would comprise the whole of Jullundur and Lahore divisions, together with Hissar, Karnal, and Simla districts of the Ambala division, and the districts of Montgomery and Lyallpur. Baldev Singh defined the Sikh state, Khalistan, in somewhat the same terms, as consisting of "the Punjab excluding Multan and Rawalpindi divisions, with an approximate boundary along the Chenab, an area comprising the Ambala division, the Jullundur division and the Lahore division."

The way the Sikh spokesmen worded their demand for a Sikh state—not as something inherently desirable, but simply as a point in an argument against Pakistan—robbed the suggestion of any chance of serious consideration. As a result, the Cabinet Mission took no notice of Sikhistan, Azad Punjab, or Khalistan and treated the idea, as well as the Sikhs' exaggerated claim to weightage, as something that had been put up (by the Indian National Congress) to thwart Muslim aspirations."(18)

S. G. P. C. AND AKALI DAL RESOLVE TO ATTAIN "SIKHISTAN"

On March 9, 1946, the S. G. P. C. passed an unanimous resolution demanding separate Sikh State and the resolution was supported by the Communists, the Nationalists and the representatives of Sikh princely States. Obviously it was to counter act the demand for Pakistan. On March 22, 1946, the Shiromani Akali Dal passed a resolution stating "Sikhistan" to be its political objective and the resolution read *inter alia*: "Whereas the Sikhs being attached to the Punjab by intimate bonds of holy shrines, property, language, traditions and claim it as their homeland and holy land which the British took as a trust from the last Sikh ruler during his minority and whereas the entity of the Sikhs is being threatened on account of the persistent demand of Pakistan by the Muslims on the one hand and of danger of absorption by the Hindus on the other, the executive committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal demands the preservation and protection of the religious, cultural and economic

and political rights of the Sikh population and their important sacred shrines and historic gurdwaras with provision for the transfer and exchange of population and property."(19)

THE CENTRAL AKALI DAL PRESENTS A SEPARATE MEMORANDUM TO THE CABINET MISSION.

"The Central Akali Dal (Baba Kharak Singh's group) presented a separate memorandum on behalf of their party. It drew attention to the faulty compilation of census figures which made the Muslims a majority in the Punjab. It opposed the partition of the Punjab and reiterated the demands that had been made by the Chief Khalsa Diwan many times since the introduction of democratic institutions, viz. 33% representation in the Punjab, 5 % in the Centre, one Sikh member in the central cabinet. In addition, it demanded an 8% representation in the Constituent Assembly (as recommended by the Sapru Committee) ; a permanent 14% Sikh quota in the defence services ; Sikh representation in U. P.. Sindh, Bihar, Bengal and Bombay, and an increase in Sikh representation in the North West Frontier Province. The Central Akali Dal supported joint electorates with reservation of seats for minorities and the setting up of special tribunals for the protection of minorities. Memorandum of the Central Akali Dal was presented to the British Cabinet Mission, April 1946 by Amar Singh, working president." 20

THE CABINET MISSION PROPOSALS.

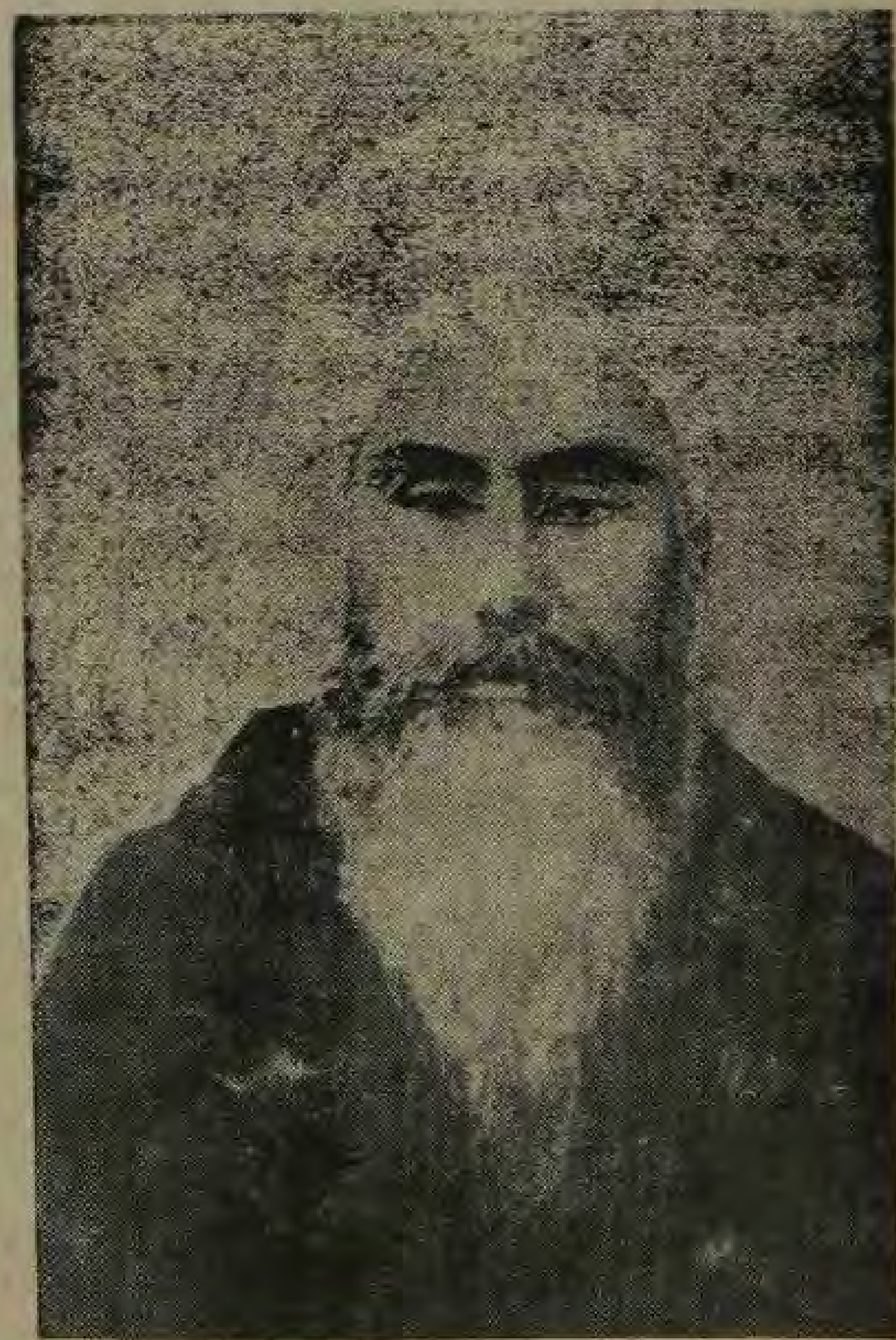
The Cabinet Mission prepared a scheme which was to be dicussed at a Conference at Simla, for arriving at some compromise between the Congress and the Muslim League. According to the scheme, a central government was to control defence, foreign affairs, and communications and two sets of provinces ; one consisting of predominantly Muslim while the other of predominantly non-Muslim areas—which were to deal with the subjects not to be dealt with by the centre. On May 16, 1946, the Cabinet Mission issued a statement bringing forward proposals which were to be the basis for the composition of an interim government including the making of the future Constitution of India. It was, of course, appreciated that those districts of Punjab which were predominantly non-Muslim could not be included in Pakistan ; that every "argument that can be used in favour of Pakistan can equally...be used in favour of the exclusion of non-Muslim areas from Pakistan, that "any division of the Punjab would of necessity divide the Sikhs, leaving substantial property of Sikhs on both sides of the boundary" and that the Sikhs were the third important community in India.

"These proposals left the Hindus and the Sikhs without sufficient safeguards in the Muslim majority province of Punjab and in the Muslim majority north-west group of provinces. It was, however, argued by the missibn that the Muslims would find it impossible to rule the province without Sikh support. The Sikhs would in fact, hold the balance of power. The Muslim League Party in Punjab might seem hostile to them for the time being but ultimately like the Unionists, it would be compelled to woo them. By such arguments Major Short and the Cabinet Mission tried to reassure the Sikhs, who had a strong suspicion that the Muslims were out to crush them." (21)

MASTER TARA SINGH'S LETTER DATED MAY 25, 1946, TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA.

Master Tara Singh was of the opinion that the Sikhs were entitled to a separate sovereign state if Muslims were to get Pakistan. The Cabinet Mission Scheme was rejected on the main ground that the position of the Sikhs would be unsatisfactory in the north-west as they could not expect justice at the hands of Muslim majority. He wrote a letter to the Secretary of State for India inviting his attention towards the gross injustice done to the Sikhs who were entirely thrown at the mercy of the Muslims. The letter is reproduced because of its historical significance:

"Since the British Cabinet Mission recommendations for the future constitution of India have been published, a wave of resentment and indignation has run throughout the Sikh community. The reasons are quite obvious. The Sikhs have been entirely thrown at the mercy of the Muslims. Group 'B' comprises Punjab, the North-West Province, Sindh and Baluchistan and the representation given to each community will be: Muslims 23, Hindus 9 and Sikhs 4. Can anybody expect from this Assembly, constituted as it is, any consideration or justice for the Sikhs ? The Cabinet Mission recognises the genuine and acute anxiety among the Sikhs lest they should find themselves subjected to a perpetual Muslim majority rule. If the British Government is not aware of Sikh feelings, the Sikhs will have to resort to some measures to convince everybody of the Sikh anxiety in case they are subjected to perpetual Muslim domination. The



Sant Attar Singh from whose hands thousands of Sikhs including Master Tara Singh were baptised.

Cabinet Mission has not only put under Muslim domination the non-Muslim areas of the Punjab and Bengal but the whole Province of Assam where the non-Muslims are in an over-whelming majority. This has been evidently done to placate the Muslims. It appears that Sikhs have been studiously debarred from having any effective influence in the province, a group or general union. I refer to Section 15 (ii) and Section 19 (vii) in which it has been definitely provided that the majority of both Hindus and Muslims is necessary for certain purposes. The Sikhs are entirely ignored, though they are as much concerned as the other communities.

"This is how I read the recommendation of the Cabinet Mission, but as the issues are very grave and momentous, the Sikh representatives assembled here today to consider the situtation created, have advised me to seek clarification from you and find out if there is any hope of such amendment as may save the Sikhs from perpetual domination.

"So I put three questions :

1. What is the significance of recognising the Sikhs as one of the main communities ?
2. Suppose the majority of Section B frames a constitution under section 19(v) but the Sikh members do not agree, does it mean a deadlock or does the opposition of the Sikh members mean simply disassociation ?
3. Is there any hope of obtaining for the Sikhs the same right as is given to the Muslims and the Hindus under Section 15 (ii) and 19 (iii) ?" (22)

MASTER JI ON CABINET MISSION

In a foreward dated June 13, 1946, to the book 'Betrayal of the Sikhs' by Landen Sarafield, Master Ji wrote *inter alia* :—

"I have read portions of the Book "Betrayal of the Sikhs". The Author understands Sikh psychology as few foreigners do, and has well grasped present situation. The Sikhs shall not submit to Muslim majority rule. There are heavy odds against the Sikhs, but everyone believes that they can repeat past history.

The Members of the Cabinet Mission remark in their statement: "Since we were greatly impressed by the very genuine and acute anxiety of the Muslims lest they should find themselves subjected to a perpetual Hindu majority rule.

This feeling has become so strong and widespread amongst the Muslims that it cannot be allayed by mere paper safeguards. If there is to be internal peace in India it must be secured by measures which will assure to the Muslims a control in all matters vital to their culture, religion and economic or other interests."

There is no doubt that the Cabinet Mission has rightly judged Muslim feelings, but they have failed to understand that the Sikh anxiety is even greater, lest they should find themselves subjected to a perpetual Muslim majority rule. This may be the cause why Sikhs have been utterly ignored, or the Cabinet Mission may have believed that Sikhs were unable to disturb internal peace while the Muslims were.

So the course left for Sikhs is to prove their "very actue and genuine anxiety", and further that there can be no internal peace, not at least in the Punjab, unless some effective power is given to the Sikhs to defend "their culture, religion and economic and other interests."

I know the Sikhs are running the greatest risk against heavy odds, but the alternative for them is sure death. I am in the situation of a man on the top of a tree with a number of cobras coming up to attack me. There appears no escape. What should I do then ? If I jump off the tree I die without giving battle to my poisonous enemies. So I decide to fight with the tiny twigs ; I can break off the branches round me. But lo ! there comes the Eagle from Heaven and I am saved ! I believe in God and I remember many miracles which He performed at critical moments in my life. I trust Him and, with this faith in my heart, I jump down this ravine in the dark. The Khalsa Panth is in danger, but it is His Panth and He can do wonders......"

THE REPLY DATED JUNE 11, 1946, BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE LETTER OF MASTER TARA SINGH DATED MAY 25, 1946

"Thank you for your letter of May 25. The anxieties of the Sikhs were kept permanently in mind when we were drafting the Cabinet Mission statement, and I can certainly claim that of the various alternatives open to us the best one from the Sikh point of view was chosen. You will, I am sure, admit that, if India had been divided into two sovereign states or if Punjab was partitioned, either of these decisions would have been far less acceptable to Sikhs than the one which was actually reached.

"I have considered carefully the detailed points you have raised at the end of your letter. I fear the Mission cannot issue any addition to, or interpretation of, the statement. There is, however, no intention whatever to prejudice the position of the Sikhs in Punjab or in the north-west group, nor do I think their position has been prejudiced, for it is inconceivable that either the Constituent Assembly or any future government of Punjab will overlook the special place of the Sikhs in the province. The estimate of the importance of your community would never depend on the number of seats that you hold in the Constituent Assembly. The Viceroy has told me that he will be glad, in view of the anxieties you have expressed on behalf of your community, to discuss the position of the Sikhs specially with the leaders of the main parties when the Constituent Assembly has been formed. He hopes he may be able to persuade them, if persuation is needed, that the interests of the Sikhs should on no account be overlooked.

"If you and Sardar Baldev Singh would care to see the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy in the first week of June, we shall be glad to see you." (23)

ALL PARTIES' SIKH CONFERENCE HELD ON JUNE 9 AND 10, 1946, RESULTING IN THE BIRTH OF THE PANTHIC PRATINIDHI BOARD.

The Conference "All Parties' Sikh Conference" ("A joint meeting of Sikh political parties*") was held at Amritsar on June 9 and 10, 1946, for considering the Cabinet Mission proposals and with the exception of the Central Akali Dal, almost every party including the Akalis, Nirmalas, Namdharis, Ramgarhias, Nihangs, the Chief Khalsa Diwan, the All-India Sikh Youth League, the Sikh Students' Federation and the Singh Sabhas sent its respective representatives who in all totalled more than 800. It was resolved that the above proposals were wholly unacceptable to the Sikhs as their just and legitimate demands were not met and their consent was not obtained. A Council of Action "The Panthic Pratinidhi Board" was constituted with Col. Niranjan Singh of I.N.A. as its dictator, while Master Tara Singh, S Baldev Singh, Bhai Jodh Singh, S. Udham Singh Nagoke, Giani Kartar Singh, S. Sarmukh Singh Chamak, S. Basant Singh Moga and S. Nidhan Singh Alam, Bawa Harkishan Singh, Babu Labh Singh, president Shiromani Akali Dal, Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafir, Colonel Raghbir Singh and one repre-

*S. Khushwant Singh in his book "A History of the Sikhs" called that Conference as "A joint meeting of Sikh political parties."

sentative each of the Chief Khalsa Diwan and the Nihangs were to be the other members. It was decided that the Cabinet proposals be opposed to the hilt and it was the "Council of Action" which prevailed upon S. Baldev Singh not to join the interim government because his participation in it would have amounted to the acceptance of the proposals, which the Board had already rejected. S. Baldev Singh addressed a letter to the British Prime Minister bringing to light the injustice done to the Sikhs and "that the over-riding factor which was weighed with the Mission in formulating its views is to give every consideration possible to the Muslim League. The League, on the other hand has made it plain that it has accepted the proposals with the object of opting out the Muslim areas and establishing an independent and sovereign Muslim state " (24) However, Mr. Attlee replied that his statement released on June 16, 1946, underlining the need for a strong and representative interim government in India could not be altered to suit the Sikhs and they should send their representatives to the Constituent Assembly in drafting the Constitution.

MEETING BETWEEN THE SIKH LEADERS AND MR. JINNAH.

Master Tara Singh and Mr. Jinnah met twice but no meeting could be arranged for the third time because of Master Ji's reluctance. S. Sarhadi in his book "Punjabi Suba" throws light about the meeting between the two leaders : "It was with great difficulty that Master Tara Singh was made to agree to see Jinnah. This meeting was arranged at New Delhi at the house of Sir Malik Teja Singh a retired Minister of the Patiala State. Maharaja Yadvindra Singh of Patiala and Sardar Hardit Singh Malik, the then Prime Minister of the Patiala State were also present at this meeting. There was a vocal section of the young Sikhs of the All India Sikh Students' Federation led by Messers Sarup Singh and Amar Singh Ambalvi who wanted Master Tara Singh to paly an independent role. It was a sad state of affairs, that he did not at first agree to meet Jinnah. Ultimately, however, Master Tara Singh met Jinnah. The Congress agents in the Sikh ranks were successful and Master Tara Singh was accompanied by Harnam Singh, later Advocate General and a Judge of the Punjab High Court. The interview was brief. Jinnah was reported to have said that he recognised the Sikhs to be a sub-national group and would concede all that was reasonable provided the demands were put in a specific form. He further stated that the Sikhs must put in writing the position and place they wanted to have in the future constitutional set up of Pakistan. Master Tara Singh

said that the offer should come from Jinnah for the Sikhs to consider and then alone the Sikhs would decide whether or not to give support to the League's demand for Pakistan. The interview ended with an exchange of views on the above lines without arriving at any conclusion. There was no possibility of any settlement, as Jinnah and the Muslim leadership had not appreciated the Sikh position correctly. Efforts had been made by the Sikh leadership particularly Giani Kartar Singh, then considered the brain trust of the Sikhs, to evoke a response from Muslim League circles about the Sikh position in the constitutional set up of their thinking but all such efforts failed. The attitude of Sikhs towards the Muslims was not very much adverse in those days and nor was the gap so great or grave that it could not be bridged. Giani Kartar Singh had even gone to the extent of having attended the meeting of the Muslim League members from all over India at Delhi, to win over the goodwill of the Muslim League, yet this also failed to bring home to the Muslim leadership the importance of the Sikhs in the India body-politic.... Whereas the Congress leadership was either unable to find a solution or was not in a mood to do so, the attitude of the Muslim League and its leadership was even worse. The attitude of Muslim League leadership could be assessed from what Jinnah said on March 22, 1946, in an interview with the representatives of the Associated Press of India at Lahore : "To-day I have met the President and the Secretary of All India Sikh Students' Federation and had a discussion with them. I made it clear to them that the Sikhs as a Nation are entitled to a State of their own. I am not opposed to it as such provided they can show me where it can be created. I assured the Sikhs that I am ready and willing to do all I can do to bring about a settlement between the Sikhs and Muslims." "Jinnah should have known that the Sikhs could hardly be expected to show where such a State could be, when they were not in a majority anywhere. It was for him to have clarified how the Sikhs could be assured their future by constitutional guarantees, otherwise in the set-up contemplated. Sarup Singh, the youth leader, was the President of the All India Sikh Students Federation. According to him, who met Jinnah more than once, Jinnah had suggested no feasible solution, but emphasised his distrust of the Congress Hindu Leadership from which he said, he "shrank" because it "stank of communalism". His stand was similar at the time when Master Tara Singh met him on 2nd April, 1946. The Sikhs themselves too were in a state of confusion about the position which they could claim as a major community and a third party."

On May 15, 1947, Maharaja Patiala and Mr. Jinnah met together at the Imperial Hotel at the instance of the Viceroy who wanted the Maharaja

to reach some settlement after taking the Sikh leaders and Mr. Jinnah into confidence. The talks continued for the whole of the night and Mr. Jinnah was prepared to give assurances and guarantees but nothing in writing nor he committed himself to any formula or proposals. Sikhs demanded the boundary line upto River Chenab, while Mr. Jinnah was opposed to the division of Ambala. Moreover, he seemed to have expressed his willingness not to oppose Ambala division being separated from the Punjab if that became inevitable. Punjab was agog with the rumours that Mr. Jinnah wanted Satluj to be the boundary line but it was expected that the parties might reach a compromise with Ravi as the boundary for East Punjab. (From the Press reports particularly the Tribune of the month of May, 1947, and the Interview with Col. Joginder Singh Maan, who took the Maharaja to the above Hotel.)

BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

Mr. Pendral Moon in his book 'Divide and Quit' referred to the following suggestions, he made to the Sikh leadership : "(1) A separate unit of Eastern Punjab with a position in Pakistan equal to that of any other unit, e. g. Sindh and Western Punjab; (2) Special privileges for the Sikh minority in Western Punjab; and (3) Special privileges for the Sikhs in Pakistan as a whole."

The Sikhs gave a chilly response, however, when they felt disgusted because of their interests being ignored by the Congress, the following basis of negotiations with the Muslim League were put forward by some of the Akalis : "(1) There should be a separate unit of East Punjab from which the four South Eastern and predominantly Hindu districts would be excluded (the four districts would have gone to India). (2) The East Punjab unit should have a right to secede from Pakistan. (3) The authority of the Central Pakistan Government should be confined to defence, foreign affairs, communication, currency and economic planning. All other powers should vest in the provincial units. (4) A three-fourths majority of Sikh legislators should be essential for any change in the constitution. (5) The Sikhs should have at least one third share in the armed forces of Pakistan."

Mr. K. C. Gulati in his book. 'The Akalis Past and Present' writes : "Some British officers explored the chances of a last-minute reapproachment to prevent the division of Punjab and its Sikh population. A plan which was pursued with some assiduity emanated from the Muslim princely state of Bahawalpur. Pendral Moon, who was then Revenue and Public Works Minister at Bahawalpur, had some friends among the

Sikhs. Through Sant Singh, Prime Minister of the princely Sikh State of Nabha, he made approaches to Sikh leaders, including Master Tara Singh, Baldev Singh and Giani Kartar Singh. Taking into confidence Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani, Prime Minister of Bahawalpur, Moon offered to secure the Sikhs a separate unit of Eastern Punjab with a position in Pakistan equal to that of any other unit, such as Sind or western Punjab; special privileges for the Sikh minority in western Punjab and special privileges for the Sikhs in Pakistan as a whole.

The Sikhs were not prepared to consider any proposals for a settlement with the League. Moon writes in his book, Divide and Quit, that the Sikh leaders were scheduled to meet him in Lahore but they failed to turn up at the appointed rendezvous. He comes to the conclusion that they were not interested and had other plans in mind. A joint conference of the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Panthic Pratinidhi Board on 12 June, 1947, disapproved of the scheme for the division of India into two sovereign states. The only redeeming feature of the plan, according to the Sikhs, was the acceptance of the principle of partition of Punjab. The conference protested that "the basis of the notional division of Punjab is, however, inequitable and unjust to the Sikhs. While plan is designed to carve out a sovereign Muslim state to satisfy the Muslim demand, it fails to provide for the Sikhs any portion of power or status or any means for the protection of their interests in the constitution-making machinery."

The resolution categorically stated that no partition of Punjab which did not preserve the solidarity and integrity of the Sikh community would be acceptable to the Sikhs. One of their spokesmen, Giani Kartar Singh, reiterated the need for a separate Sikh homeland to develop their culture and preserve their entity : "We want our solidarity to be preserved at all costs. We do not want change of masters by passing under subjugation of either the Hindus or Muslims. We are determined to secure our homeland even if we have two big parties to face."

In the Press reports published on March 10, 1947, the Muslim League Leaders, Mr. Feroze Khan Noon is reported to have invited the Sikhs to a round table conference for solving the political problems of Punjab. He talked of certain suggestions : "Punjab as it stands today should be a separate and sovereign State allied neither to Akhand Hindustan nor to Pakistan ; Punjab should be with B Group and Sikhs should have constitutional guarantees which are enforceable by a new federal constitution in B Group to be set up for this and other purposes; Sikhs could be given facilities to teach Punjabi (Gurmukhi) language ;

Sikhs be given share in the educational grants aud assurances and guarantees could be incorporated in the constitution that only that decision shall prevail which shall be arrived at by the majority Sikh vote relating to the matters connected with Sikh religion, law of inheritance, custom and other personal laws and lastly Sikh Public Service Commission is to be set up for the selection of the Sikhs for services." Another suggestion was that if predominantly Sikh areas wished to go to the adjoining 'Punjab Sikh State', they could be allowed to do so. However, Masterji denied that any of the suggestions were ever given by him or by a person authorized by him.

ECLIPSE OF PANTHIC PRATINIDHI BOARD.

The Sikhs felt that their legitimate political aspirations had been ignored, therefore, they decided to reject the Cabinet Mission plan and as a consequence of the same, they bycotted the elections to the Constituent Assembly, but when S. Niranjan Singh Gill and S. Kairon got a telegram from Pt. Nehru for consideration of the decision of boycott, the Congress Sikhs and Akalis agreed to file their nominations. From the side of the Congress, S. Kairon, S. Sarup Singh, Babu Bachan Singh and S. Shiv Singh were the nominees, while S. Baldev Singh, S. Ujjal Singh, S. Narotam Singh and Bawa Harkishan Singh were the Akali nominees. On July 14, 1946, Mr. Gill summoned the meeting of the Sikh M.L.As., and it stuck to its earlier decision of bycotting the Constituent Assembly and the eight candidates withdrew from the contest. By the middle of August, 1946, the Board's attitude changed because the Congress Working Committee assured the Sikhs that their genuine grievances would be favourably looked into and as a consequence of the same, the Board permitted the Sikhs to join the Constituent Assembly. In November, the nationalist Sikhs arrived at a decision to quit the Board because of the dispute with the Akalis over the Gurdwara elections. Namdharis also followed the suit and the Board became virtually a paper organisation.

S. (Justice) Harnam Singh spoke at length in the 9th Central Training camp of the A.I.S.S.F. held in 1959, at Gurdwara Majnu Tilla, Delhi and he made a reference to the talks which the Sikh delegation had with the Cabinet Mission. According to him, the members of the Mission did not find the demand of Sikh State feasible as the Sikhs, at that time, were in majority in three tehsils only, namely : Moga, Tarn Taran and Jagraon. Moreover, those tehsils had no contiguity whatsoever. In "Merian Yadan" (My Recollections) Master Tara Singh very frankly and fairly conceded that they never knew that a Sikh State could be



S. Harnam Singh, S. Hardit Singh Malik, S. Harmela Singh Malik, S. Pritam Singh Gojran and S. Phul, who was the then President of the AISSF, are seen sitting on the platform, while S. Ambalvi is addressing the delegates in the training camp of AISSF held in the month of June 1959, at Gurdwara Majnu Tilla Sahib, Delhi.

made even when the Sikhs were in minority. According to his version, he came to know through the Communist Paper Pravada for the first



(The delegates who attended the above training camp at Gurdwara Majnu Tilla in June, 1959. The author of this book is standing between Dr. Manohar Singh and Prof. Phul. On the left hand side of Maharani Gurcharan Kaur of Nabha is S. Amar Singh Ambalvi, while Prof. J. S. Phul is seen towards her right hand side.)

time in Almora Jail in 1949, that there were only two nations in the world who did not have their homelands, although they fulfilled all the ingredients constituting a nation ; the first was the Jews, while the second was the Sikhs. Obviously, the Sikh delegation could not press the precedent of Israel into service. (See Jiwan Sangharsh Te Udesh by late S. Jaswant Singh).

One certainly becomes wiser after the event ; while sitting in the year 1978 and assessing the events, which happened in quick succession during the partition days, one is at liberty to hazard any speculation as to what could or could not have been done but after taking all the attendant circumstances into consideration, it can be safely concluded that there was a remote possibility for the creation of a Sikh State firstly because of the numerical inferiority, the Sikhs* were not in a position to develop the same bargaining capacity as was the case with Muslims ; secondly the Sikhs lacked a leader of the stature of Mr. Jinnah and thirdly the relations between the Hindus and the Sikhs were extremely cordial and Master Tara Singh had become the supreme leader of both the Hindus and the Sikhs during the partition days. Moreover, it was a gamble too dangerous and risky to be gone through especially when the Sikhs lacked faith in the promises of the Muslim League. At that curcial time, the Sikhs had two options : either to join Pakistan or to face the partition, and they chose the later, of-course, rightly. The partition enabled the Sikhs to enhance the percentage of their population in the Joint Punjab from 13 to 35 in the East Punjab. However, Master Tara Singh concluded in this above book that the Sikhs succeeded in getting rid of the Muslim domination but they succumbed to the Hindu domination all right.

HODSON ON THE POSITION OF THE SIKHS AT THE TIME OF PARTITION

"(The Sikhs) see that the partition of India means substantially and irrevocably the partition of the Sikhs and they feel themselves to

*Sir Cripps referred to the Sikhs in the statement made in the British Parliament on July 18, 1946, with the remarks : "It was a matter of great distress to us that the Sikhs should feel that they had not received the treatment which they deserved as an important section. The difficulty arises, not from anyone's underestimation of the importance of the Sikh community but from the inescapable geographical facts of the situation. What the Sikhs demand in some special treatment analogous to that given to the Muslims. The Sikhs, however, are a much smaller community, 5,500,000 against 90,000,000, and are not geographically situated so that any area as yet desired can be carved out in which they would find themselves in a majority. "(Statesman July 19, 1946).

be sacrified on the altars of Muslim ambition and Hindu opportunism."

(Report dt. 14-6-47, by the press attache to Lord Mountbatten.)*

In 'The Great Divide', Mr. H.V. Hodson wrote at page 537 : "One community suffered most directly from the settlement, the Sikhs, whom partition divided and whom it deprived of some of their best lands. But partition was their own wish, and none of their leaders repudiated Sardar Baldev Singh's acceptance of it in their name. Their only constructive demand, not seriously pressed, was for a state or province of their own—Sikhistan or Khalistan. This was quite out of the question in 1947. There was not a single district of the Punjab in which they had a majority. When the dust of partition had settled and the great migrations had ended, their demand for national identity was renewed, and was at length partially granted in a re-drawing of state boundaries twenty years later. But this was something that could come about only at the hands of an Indian regime."

VIEWS OF S. JASWANT SINGH NEKI

In the 3rd Annual Session of the A. I. S. S. F. held at Jullundur on October 8, 1949, Dr. Neki said : "The Federation and Shiromani Akali Dal have both rightly and properly rejected the new constitution of India that is being forced on us. For this constitution enshrines within itself a long tale of broken promises to the Sikhs and breach of faith reposed by them in Congress professions. You all know gentlemen that the Congress promised and assured the Sikhs in 1929 that on attainment of independence no constitution affecting the Sikhs would be passed which would not have their complete satisfaction. This was repeated ad nauseum. Laterly when the Independence negotiations began the Congress found itself diplomatically isolated when the Sikhs and the Muslim League both boycotted the Constituent Assembly. Again on Congress persuation and promises, the Sikhs lifted the boycott and thereby turned tables on the Muslim League who now remained the only body outside the Constituent Assembly. Then when the Congress in utter violation of all its previous stands, accepted Pakistan, it was on the Sikh insistence and for the Sikhs and due to the Sikhs efforts and sacrifices that half of the Punjab was saved from going into Pakistan**. This one

*'Mission with Mountbatten' P. 118.

**Master Tara Singh is of the opinion that 4 police stations of Lahore and Gurdaspur came to India because of the sympathetic attitude of the British Govt. towards the Sikhs.

momentous achievement has been of the greatest good to India for thereby not only the East Punjab was saved, but the present Himachal Pradesh, Patiala and East Punjab States Union were saved; India's boundaries became coterminous with Kashmir otherwise Kashmir would have fallen into the lap of Pakistan like a ripe fruit. Had East Punjab not been saved Pakistan's frontiers would only have been sixteen miles from Delhi. Pakistan liaison with Musalmans of U. P. would have been complete and it is too far—fetched to imagine that 'rabid Pakistanis' dreams of conquering Hindustan had greater chances of success than they ever can have now. For all this immeasurable service to India, do the Sikhs only deserve kicks and frowns ? What did they suffer for ? 40% of their kith and kin are uprooted and all those smiling gardens which they nurtured by their sweat and toil, all their hearths and homes along with their lives earnings lost; laid down thousands of lives in their fight against Muslim oppression and after all what for ? was it merely for being despised and looked down upon ?

This new constitution robs us of what we already enjoyed, weightage guarantee of services, independent representation. It does not secure anything for our existence as a political entity in the future set-up of the country. The Sikhs demand for a Punjabi-speaking province has also been cold shouldered......"

WHAT DOES S. KHUSHWANT SINGH SAY ?

"Sikh leaders did not press the case for a Sikh State with sincerity. No one took their line of approach seriously."

(KHUSHWANT SINGH)

"THE ideal of a sovereign Sikh state has never been very far from the Sikh mind. Ever since the days of Guru Gobind Singh, Sikh congregations have chanted the litany *Raj karey ga Khalsa*—the Khalsa shall rule—as a part of their daily prayer; innumerable Sikhs gave their lives to achieve this ambition. The establishment of the kingdom of Maharajah Ranjit Singh confirmed the belief of the Sikhs that it was their destiny to rule the Punjab. The fall of the kingdom was regarded as a temporary setback. And despite their early loyalty towards the British, when home rule for India was first proposed, Sikh leaders began to say; "If the British have to go, it is only right that the Punjab should be restored to the Sikhs from whom it was wrongfully seized." The chief cause of Sikh uneasiness in free India was the resurgence of Hinduism which threatened to engulf the minorities. Renascent Hinduism manifested itself in a phenomenal increase in Hindu religious organisations, the revival of

Sanskrit, and the ardent championing of Hindi. The Punjabi Hindu was more aggressive than the Hindu of other provinces. Organisations, notably those connected with the Arya Samaj and its political counterpart, the Jan Sangh, started a campaign to persuade Punjabi-speaking Hindus to disown their mother tongue and adopt Hindi...The only chance of survival of the Sikhs as a separate commnnity is to create a state in which they form a compact group, where the teaching of Gurmukhi and the Sikh religion is compulsory, and where there is an atmosphere of respect for the traditions of their Khalsa forefathers."*

VIEWS OF BHAI SAHIB SIRDAR KAPUR SINGH ON THE BACKGROUND OF THE DEMAND OF SIKH HOMELAND.

While opening the debate on the Pb. Reorganisation Bill, 1966, the Sirdar said in the Lok Sabha on September 6, 1966 : "......I ask the hon members to take their minds back to the year 1929, when the All India National Congress met at the banks of the river Ravi—Airavati of our ancestors—and fixed complete Independence as its political goal. On that bitterly cold night of destiny, I was present as one of the student volunteers in the service of the Nation. On the previous day, the Sikhs had taken out a five hundred thousand strong procession with veteran Baba Kharak Singh leading it on elephant back, from under the walls of the ancient fort at Lahore, which was described in The Times, of London, as :

"a most impressive spectacle of human congregation that put the Congress show into shame and shade."

It was on this occasion that Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, and Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, went to meet Baba Kharak Singh at his place on the Chauburji Road, and gave the Sikhs a solemn assurance that after India achieves political freedom, no Constitution shall be framed by the majority community unless it is freely acceptable to the Sikhs. This promise was then reduced into a formal policy Resolution of the All India Congress Committee.

Afterwards, this Policy Resolution was repeatedly reiterated, officially and demi-officially, throughout the period upto August 1947, and it was not officially repudiated till 1950 when the present Constitution was framed. The trusting Sikhs, who in their Daily Prayer, extoll keeping faith as, the noblest of human virtues, placing complete reliance in this solemn under-taking given to them by the majority community, resisted and refused all offers and proposals made to them

*(From a History of the Sikhs Volume 2 : (1839—1974)

by the British and the other people—the Muslims—whom we now prefer to call, the Muslim League—proposing to accord the Sikhs a sovereign or autonomous status in the areas constituting their ancestral homeland between the river Ghaggar and the river Chenab. This is the first link of the story which I am going to narrate here so as to provide background to the conclusion as to why this Bill should be rejected. The second link is that in the year 1932, at the time of the Second Round Table Conference, the British Government, through Sardar Bahadur Shivdev Singh, then a member of the Indian Secretary of State's Council, made an informal proposal to the Sikhs that if they disassociate finally with the Congress movement, they would be given a decisive political weightage in the Punjab, such as would lead to their emerging as a third independent element in India after the British transfer power to the inhabitants of this sub-continent.

The much maligned, the naive, Master Tara Singh, to my personal knowledge, promptly rejected this tempting offer. I was then a student at the University of Cambridge and was closely associated with these developments.

The third link is this : In the month of July, 1946, the All India Congress Working Committee met at Calcutta, which reaffirmed the assurances already given to the Sikhs, and in his Press Conference held on the 6th July, there, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru spelt out the concrete content of these solemn undertakings in the following flowery words :

> "The brave Sikhs of the Punjab are entitled to special consideration. I see nothing wrong in an area and a set-up in the North wherein the Sikhs can also experience the glow of freedom."

In these words, an autonomous State to the Sikhs, within India was promised.

Fourthly, in the early winter of 1946, the Cabinet Mission, while at Delhi, communicated to the Sikhs through the late Sardar Baldev Singh that if the Sikhs are determined not to part company with Hindu India, the British Parliament, in their solicitude for the Sikh people, was prepared to so frame the Independence Act of India, so that in respect of the Sikh homeland, wherever these areas might eventually go, in Pakistan or India, no Constitution shall be framed such as does not have the concurrence of the Sikhs. But Sardar Baldev Singh, in consultation with the Congress leaders, summarily rejected this offer which went even beyond the assurances given by the majority community, in 1929 and in 1946 by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in Calcutta.

Fifthly, in April, 1947, Mr. Jinnah, in consultation with certain most powerful leaders of the British Cabinet in London, offered to the Sikhs, first through Master Tara Singh and then through the Maharaja of Patiala, a sovereign Sikh State, comprising areas lying in the west of Panipat and east of the left bank of the Ravi river, on the understanding that this State then confederates with Pakistan on very advantageous terms to the Sikhs. Master Tara Singh summarily rejected this attractive offer and the Maharaja of Patiala declined to accept in consultation with Sardar Patel and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Sixthly, on the 9th December, 1946, when the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly was held under the chairmanship of Babu Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru moved the first and the fundamental Resolution in which it was said :

"Adequate safeguards would be provided for minorities......It was a declaration, a pledge and an undertaking before the world, a contract with millions of Indians, and, therefore, in the nature of an oath*, which we must keep. What happens in case of political perjury

*To take recourse to a solemn oath, to inspire confidence that might be betrayed when convenient, is quite in the political tradition of the Indian National Congress. On 16th March, 1931, Mahatma Gandhi came to a special Sikh Congregation held in Gurdwara Sisganj, Delhi, where he was asked as to what guarantee there was that his Indian National Congress would implement the assurances given to the Sikh People in 1929, at Lahore. His reply is publised in his *Young India*, of the 19th March 1931, and it contains the following :

"Sardar Madhusudan Singh has asked for an assurance that the Congress would do nothing that might alienate sympathies of Sikhs from the Congress. Well, the Congress, in its Lahore Session. passed a Resolution that it would not enter into or be a party to any settlement with regard to the minority question that failed to satisfy any of the minorities concerned. What further assurances the Congress can give to the Sikhs, I fail to understand......I ask you to accept my word and the Resolution of the Congress that it will not betray a single individual much less a community. If it ever thinks of doing so, it will only hasten its own doom......I pray you, therefore, to unbosom yourselves of all your doubts......What more shall I say ? What more can I say than this : "Let God be the witness of the bond that bind me and the Congress with you."

When further asked as to what may the Sikhs do in case of betrayal, he said the Sikhs could, in that case, take their *Kirpans* in hand with perfect justification before God and man.

is not a point I propose to discuss today, for, when neither the feelings of shame, the reproaches of conscience, nor the dread of punishment from any bar is there, the sufferers can only pray to God, which the Sikhs are doing today. But since it is the pre-requisite of power to invent its own past, I am putting the record straight for the Public opinion and the posterity by recapitulating this sorry tale of betrayal of the Sikhs, a trusting people.

Seventhly, in the month of May, 1947, Lord Mountbatten, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Nawab Liaquaat Ali Khan and Sardar Baldev Singh, flew to London on the invitation of the British Cabinet, in search of a final solution of the Indian Communal problem. When the Congress and the Muslim League failed to strike any mutual understanding and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru decided to return to India, the British Cabinet leaders conveyed to Sardar Baldev Singh that, if he stays behind, arrangements might be made :

> "so as to enable the Sikhs to have political feet of their own on which they may walk into the current of World History."



Pt. Nehru, Mr. Jinnah, Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan and S. Baldev Singh together with the viceroy arrived in London on December 2, 1946.
Secretary of State receiving the Indian Leaders. (L to R) Mr. Jinnah, S. Baldev Singh, Lord Pathic-Lawrence and Pt. Nehru. Courtesy : 'The Transfer of Power in India' by V. P. Menon (Orient Longmans).

Sardar Baldev Singh promptly divulged the contents of this confidential offer to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and in compliance with the latter's wishes, declined to stay back and flew back to India after giving the following brave message to the Press :

> "The Sikhs have no demands to make on the British except the demand that they should quit India. Whatever politcal rights and aspirations the Sikhs have, they shall have them satisfied through the goodwill of the Congress and the majority community."

Eighthly, and lastly, in the month of July, 1947, the Hindu and Sikh members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly met at Delhi to pass a unanimous Resolution favouring partition of the country, in which Resolution occur the following words :

> "In the divided Indian Punjab, special constitutional measures are imperative to meet just aspirations and rights of the Sikhs."

It is these very Hindus of the Punjab, who, with the ready aid of the Government of India leaders, even when their understanding was not qualified to keep pace with the wishes of their heart, adopted every conceivable posture and shrank from no stratagem to keep Sikhs permanently under their political heel, first, by refusing to form a Punjabi-speaking State in which the Sikhs might acquire political effectiveness, and second by falsely declaring that Punjabi was not their mother tongue.

The bill before the House is a calculatedly forged link in the chain, the sordid story of which I have just now narrated. When in 1950, the present Constitution Act in India was enacted, the accredited

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S. Ajit Singh Sarhadi in his book 'Punjabi Suba' writes at

Page 102 : "Baldev Singh's role in December 1946 on his visit to England as a camp-follower of Nehru, was deplorable. All that he said was that the future of the Sikhs lay with the Congress and that they could look after themselves and all they wanted from the British was to quit, transferring power to the Congress. Different stories were current at that time about the alleged reapproachment of Jinnah and Baldev Singh. It is said that he invited Baldev Singh at tea at the Carlton Hotel and during the talk gave him a slip of paper to write down what he demanded for Sikhs. Baldev Singh replied that the Sikhs had thrown their fate with the Congress and enquired if Jinnah would accept Pakistan if it was not of the shape and size that he demanded, Jinnah was reported to have taken back the

representatives of the Sikhs—the Shiromani Akali Dal—declared vehemently and unambiguously in the Constituent Assembly that :

"the Sikhs do not accept this Constitution ; the Sikhs reject this Constitution Act."

Our spokesmen* declined to append their signatures to the Constitution Act as a token of this clear and irrevocable rejection."

SARDAR KAPUR SINGH ON SIKH HOME-LAND

"'Sikhs' Political goal is divinely fixed."

(Kapur Singh)

"The demand for Sikh Home-land, within the Union of India, has three fold validity and sources. It is vested in the original doctrine of the Khalsa as laid down by Guru Gobind Singh himself which postulates that freedom of the human spirit fortified by political Sovereignty is the true desideratum of the Khalsa. "Khalsa mero Sah Kau Sahu" 'My Khalsa is Suigeneris Sovereign'. Since the Khalsa was founded in compliance with the Will of God (agia bhai Akal Ki tabhi Chalaio Panth), an unceasing endeavour to achieve and maintain its birthright of

small paper and replied that he would accept Pakistan even if it was as small as that tiny paper. We have, however, no proof of the authenticity of this story, for Baldev Singh's papers have not been published. He once told me that he would publish his memoirs, but he died soon after. There was another story too. It was said that Churchill had sounded Baldev Singh about prolonging his stay for a couple of days after Nehru left, to have discussion with the British Cabinet to consider some plan how the Sikhs could be fitted in with due safeguards in either of the two zones but this information went to Nehru who insisted that Baldev Singh must accompany him back to India. This story seems to have some authenticity for it was conveyed by Mr. George Abell (later Sir George Abell) to one of his old Indian class-fellows, who was then in the I.C.S. in the Punjab service. It seemed that the Sikh leadership was totally confused and could not discuss a way out of the muddle that prevailed. They knew too, that there was no area where they had majority, which they could demand as the Sikh home-land. Jinnah had suggested an exchange of population at one stage and Sikh leadership had supported the suggestion in July, 1947, but the Congress Leadership did not care to take it up, possibly considering the Sikhs and their future to be a minor issue in their way of thinking."

*S. Hukam Singh & S. Bhupinder Singh Mann.

Sovereignty is the divine Commandment for the Khalsa, which might be disobeyed by the renegades, neglected by the weaklings and compromised by the traitors, but which cannot be abrogated or annulled by mortals. All such powers or organisations that seek so to do commit an act of War against the Khalsa.

Secondly, leaders of the Indian National Congress and the leaders of the Hindu Community, including the Hindu leaders of Punjab, had eversince 1929 repeatedly given solemn undertakings to the Sikh people that after the British quit India, no Constitution will be framed except that the "Sikhs freely accept it and that in the North of India an area shall be politically demarcated wherein the Sikhs can breathe the air of freedom," that is, can realise their true Sovereign personality in a specified territory and within a constitutionally guaranteed frame work. In my speech made in the Lok Sabha, while opening the debate on the Punjab Reorganisation Bill 1966, on the 6th September, 1966, I listed such undertakings and promises in detail and stated how these promises were cynically broken when the Constitution of India was framed in 1950, and how the Sikhs' representatives in the Constituent Assembly declared their unambiguous and categorical rejection of the Constitution imposed upon the Sikhs by brute majority, thus usurping all decision-making powers for the minority Community. Broken Pledges do not invalidate the contents and purport of the Pledges, and usurpation bestows no normal sanction for suppression or extinction of ligitimate rights.

Thirdly, the Fathers of Our Constitution have embedded Key Phrase in the very first Article of the Constitution Act, which indicates the true Personality and nature of the nation which the Constitution seeks to and must preserve. In the Article I, it is stated that our country is, "India, that is Bharat". It is obvious that the Father of our Constitution did not seek to preserve merely a State and a people politically organised as a nation, but they endeavoured to revive and preserve certain fundamental and abiding Values that are inseparable from the concept of a geographical area and an ethnic and cultural group of historical antiquity. This India with frontiers such as history and Nature have given to it, and inhabited by a people who cherish and practise a way of life, according to norms and precept, called, *Dharma*. But eversince 1947, trends have been generated and policies promulgated that aim at destroying *Dharma* and substituting in its place an alien Philosphy of life and rules of Conduct. A Secular State in the meaning of a State which is un-concerned about, if not actually hostile to *Dharma*, is a state that is ultravires of Article I of our Constitution and a political

climate that is openly inimical to the ancient moral foundations of our Society is an an act of sabotage of our Constitution. The so-called Socialist Pattern of Society which has remained the Political Credo of the ruling party, ever-since the transfer of power in India and recognition of primacy of materialism as the base of all Spiritual and Cultural activities of man is simple Crypto-Communism and tentamounts to flagrant violation of Key Article of our constitution.

As it is, this devaluation of *Dharma* in India, that ought to have been forever Bharat, has hit the interests of the Sikhs the hardest. It

PROPOSED SIKH HOMELAND*



When I asked Sirdar Kapur Singh that within the boundary-lines of the proposed Sikh Homeland, the Sikhs would be in minority, he said, "The question of minority or majority is irrelevant; the above State would comprise the Punjabi-speaking areas, where the Sikh's interests would be of special importance."

*Marked in bold outline.

has encouraged deliberate policies and programmes by the State-Powers in the country that specifically seek to disintegrate the Khalsa, debase the Sikh personality and debilitate the Sikh potential for making and influencing history. These policies and programmes are motivated by historcial anti-Sikh proclivities of the Majority community to which a reference was made by Mr. D. Petrie, Assistant Director, Criminal Intelligence, Government of India, in his Secret Report now, in the National Archieves) to the Government of India, dated the 16th October, 1911. In para 6, of this document it is revealed that, "That activities of Hindus, have been constantly directed to the undermining of Sikhism, both by preventing the children of Sikh fathers from taking the Sikh baptism (Pahul) and seducing professed Sikhs from their allegiance to their faith." In India, after freedom, such activities have been intensified on State and Government level, in the Civil Services and Military Organisations, in the economic and cultural spheres, and now a stage has been reached that either the Sikhs must vigorously safeguard their interests and existence through fundmental political arrangements or accept the gradual and ignominious death. The Sikhs want to live as all living things do and they do not want to die.

The demand for Sikh Homeland is justified because it has a Divine sanction behind it. It is justified because it embodies fundamental suigeneris rights of the Sikh people. It is justified because it is based on solemn pledges and undertakings given to the Sikh people by the majority community who are now the repository of political power of the State. It is justified because it seeks to restore in a Corner of the Country, the essence of our Constitution enshrined in the Article I. It is justified on the ground of self-preservation of the Sikh people. These justifications are collectively weightier than those urged in favour of freedom for India, in favour of Creation of Pakistan, in favour of setting up of Israel as a sovereign State. The demand for Sikh Homeland within the Union of India, is, therefore, morally unassailable and politically irresistible.

This demand for the Sikh Homeland has three ingredients. Firstly, it is demanded that all left out contiguous Sikh and Punjabi-speaking areas should be added to the present Punjab, including Bhakra, Nangal, Chandigarh and portions of Ganganagar of Rajasthan. Secondly, this amplified State, within the Indian Union, should be given the right to frame its own internal autonomous constitution, as was done in the case of Jammu and Kashmir, under the Article 370, as it stood in the year 1950, Thirdly, and lastly, it should be recognised and explicitly stipulated in our Constitution Act that in this enlarged and autonomous State

of Punjab, the interests of the Sikhs are of special importance, so as to make it Constitutional to include such directives and provisions of public policy in the internal Constitution of this State as deemed necessary or desirable for preserving the deposits of Sikhism and for safeguarding the Sikh Way of life.

The internal Constitutian of this autonomous State shall be democratically framed, within the ambit of the Constitution Act of India, and it cannot create a theocracy or a non equalitarian, graded society wherein a Class of Citizens or Section of society are more privilleged than the rest..."*

BHAI SAHIB SIRDAR KAPUR SINGH.

"When he speaks or writes, he is a Yogi."

(L.te S. Suchet Singh, M. A., Member of Constituent Assembly of India.)

"He is an exciting and multi-dimensional personality."

(Sardarni Nirlep Kaur, former M. P.)

"Listening to S. Kapur Singh is an education, talking to him is a folly, and arguing with him is a sin."

(Author.)

The name of Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh and the demand for the creation of a Sikh Homeland are inseparable and his name with the Sikh Homeland concept, its formulation and demand is as much associated as Maharaja Ranjit Singh's name is with the Punjab or Mr. Jinnah's name with Pakistan. Some feel that he is short-tempered, and one may get the feeling that he is irked on account of his blatant non-recognition at the hands of Sikh Community, nevertheless, one is sure to be more than compensated by meeting him because of his scholarly, illuminating and elevating talk surcharged with his encyclopaedic knowledge. He is truly a man of learning, a legend, and an institution, and is viewed as one of the most controversial and scintilating figures, the Sikhs have ever produced. When he writes or speaks, one is impressed into amazement by his intellectual acumen and vast learning, His knowledge is not only upto-date but has the quality of a thrust into future.

Sirdar Kapur Singh was born on March 2,1909, and was educated at Government College, Lahore, and Cambridge University. At Cambridge University he received his Tripos in Moral Sciences and in 1934 he entered into the Indian Civil Service. He has been a Member of Indian Parliament and also a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly. How he preserved his self-respect in the face of heavy odds and how he maintained the dignity which inheres in a human being by virtue of being human, is a separate and a very edifying story in itself. On October

*Press statement made by S. Kapur Singh on April 27, 1969, at Jullundur.

13, 1973, S. Kapur Singh was conferred the status and title of National Professor of Sikhism by Jathedar Sadhu Singh of Akal Takhat, the highest seat of Sikh religion. He is an intellectual of high calibre with a restless, introspective and cogitating soul ; a philosopher and logician with specialization in comparative, abstruse and exegetical study of Aryan and semitic religions. He is a linguist known for his equal command over many modern as well as classical Asian and European languages. He is also an administrator with quick grasp and a tight grip. Further, he is a parliamentarian and a legislator, known for his intelligent parry and sharp thrust; a most eminent protagonist for an honourable political status for Sikhs, 'within the Indian Union.' He is an individualist, both feared and respected by friend and foe alike. He is a messenger whose soul effuses and bursts forth in words mightier than the fire of a soldier on behalf of Sikhs and Sikhism. He is a General of Sikh advocacy. Born in a Sikh middle class peasant family of rural Lyallpur district, now in West Pakistan, S. Kapur Singh topped the list of successful candidates in the subject of Philosophy of the Master of Arts degree examination of the Punjab University in 1931. In 1934, he earned a Tripos from the Cambridge University in England, and also passed through the Indian Civil Service Examination. While serving with the Indian Civil Service, he had the audacity to go and live with Mahatama Gandhi and developed close relations with the Sikh leader, Master Tara Singh. In 1941, under orders of the Government of India, whose employee he then was, all copies of his book *The Hour of the Sword*, based on the *Panth Prakash* of Rattan Singh Bhangoo, were ordered confiscated. He has lectured in varlous Universities, and before highly intellectual audiences, and has toured all over the world.

S. Kapur Singh is the author of *Me Justice*, a Miscellany, in English, on political, cultural and religious subjects : *Parasharprasna*, a thesis, in English, on the status and significance of Sikhism: *Sachi Sakhi*, in Punjabi prose, Political Memoirs and Analysis of contemporary Sikh history : *Bahuvistar*, in Punjabi prose, a Collection of Historical and scientific Essays : *Pundreek*, in Punjabi prose, a collection of Cultural Essays ; *Saptshring*, in Punjabi prose, Seven Living Biographies of Great men.

How bad and sad it has been that the talents and services of a person of the genius and potentialities of S. Kapur Singh have not been availed of as it should have been. Perhaps, the present leadership did not appreciate that by honouring him it would have only honoured itself. When asked to give the piece of guideline to the Sikhs, he simply shrugged and quoted the words of American poet, Robert Herick :

"'He loves his bonds who when the first are broke,
Submits his neck unto a second yoke."



The above picture 'Raj Karega Khalsa' painted by the renowned artist, S. Kirpal Singh, is displayed in the drawing-room of Sirdar Kapur Singh, who got it prepared by furnishing the guide-lines. It relates to 1739, when Sardars Bota Singh and Garja Singh established 'The Sovereign Sikh State'.*

*During the fourties of the 18th century, almost all the Sikhs had been killed or expelled from the Punjab through genocide by the Mughal Governors, Abdul Samad, Zakariya Khan, and Muinul-Mulk known as Mir Mannu to the Sikh chroniclers. Towards the end of 1739, one Bota Singh and his companion Garja Singh travelled clandestinely from Jaipur to have a dip in the holy tank at Amritsar. Near Serai Noordin, 3 miles from Tarn Taran, they had hidden themselves in the bushes as they could walk only during nights to avoid being apprehended. Two persons from a distance noticed them, and one of them remarked that they might be



S. Kirpal Singh, a renowned artist.

S. KAPUR SINGH'S ADVICE TO THE MAJORITY COMMUNITY : "DON'T TRY TO DISINTEGRATE AND DISSOLVE THE KHALSA BECAUSE........."

"Then there is another aspect of the matter that I have in view in making this appeal. Deliberate and persistent efforts are being made

Sikhs to which the other replied that it could not be so because no Sikhs were left alive and in any case, a living Sikh never concealed himself. There-upon, Bota Singh and Garja Singh decided to make their presence public. They occupied a small bridge, where a Govt. toll post was situated, drove away the Govt. officials and proclaimed a sovereign Sikh State in a small area of a few thousand yards. They collected and established all the symbols and insignia of the sovereign state namely : a national flag, a royal drum, a small tent as the 'capital' and they started realising the state toll tax at the rate of one anna per cart load and one pice of per donkey load of excisable goods as dues to the sovereign Sikh State. The contingent of regional constabulary came to apprehend them but these custodians of the Sikh state robbed and drove them away. Thus, this state of affairs continued over a fortnight and all the people willingly paid the taxes due and obeyed the orders of these two Sikhs. To collect taxes was not the mission of Bota Singh ; he actually wanted to show that despite all efforts to exterminate the Sikhs, they existed and very much existed. Bota Singh, the senior custodian of the state, sent a written 'proclamation' to the Mughal Governor of Lahore, 'notifying' the establishment of the sovereign Sikh state :—

Chitthi likhai yaun Singh Bota.

Hath hai sota, vich rah kharota.

Ana laya gadde nu, paisa laya khota.

Akho bhabi Khano nu, yaun akhai Singh Bota.

The following is the english translation done by Dr. Ganda Singh :—

Thus writes Bota Singh this letter.
"With a big stick in hand, on the road I stand,
Levying an anna for a cart, and a pice for a donkey-load.
Tell sister-in-law Khano that this is a message from Bota Singh."

When the 'proclamation' reached the Governor, he sent 50 horsemen, 200 foot soldiers and 10 camel guns to the 'capital' of the state and in the ensuing skirmish, both the Sikhs died protecting the Sikh state. Now a Sikh Gurdwara stands on the spot and these two brave Sikhs are revered as the Sikh martyrs to the cause of the Khalsa.

to disintegrate and dissolve the Khalsa ever since the country has gained freedom. Under the disguise of democracy, secularism and the false theory of 'one-nation', subtle schemes and sinister policies are being persued with the aim of first disintegrating the Khalsa into individual Sikhs and then debasing the individual Sikhs into secular, unrelated citizens so that they just make good cannon-fodder, good *chowkidars* of banks and business establishments owned by others, and good chauffeurs for expensive limousines of industrial magnates of a united Indian nation and thus they are deprived of their history—making potency and dynamism. To reduce the royal Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh into the secular proletariat of hewers and wood and drawers of water for the traditional higher classes of Hindus and the new priviligentia of a free India, is the greatest betrayal of the sacred trust created by the sacrifices of those, who have, throughout the ages, toiled and suffered and sacrificed for freedom of Dharma, that is India, that is, Bharat. This, evil design must be frustrated by the Young Khalsa."

"In educational texts and policies, they are injecting anti-Sikh virus."

"In the Public Services they are creating an atmosphere hostile to the self-respect, integrity and co-hesiveness of the Khalsa."

"In the fighting forces of the country they are reducing the *Singhs*, the Lions of Guru Gobind Singh, into shaven and shorn slaves of a godless centre of power and command, and everywhere and in every way it is sought to devalue the Sikhs and its visible apotheosis and ideal, the Khalsa."

"Those now in power, do not seem to realise that thus they are reducing the Sikh people to a condition of rootlessness and individual irresponsibility, such as can only add to the gangs of smugglers, communists, and anti-social forces. Unless they are extricated from this morass through establishment of the Sikh Homeland where they are enabled to salvage their identity, the Sikhs are bound to become a danger to others in their desperate efforts to find meaning and purpose through whatever comes to hand, communism, nihilism, bizzarre religions, or far-out protest movements. They will become a hazard to everyone, more so to those who now assiduously plan to disintegrate and dissolve them. At the back of the Sikh Society, behind their energy and productive capacity, at the root of their deathless courage and undying loyalty to high causes, there is something as powerful as it is

intangible. This power is a set of ideas and attitudes and convictions and the confidence that these ideas and attitudes and convictions are viable. If they are forced to the belief that it is not so they will erupt, before they shed off their panoply of history—making power, and darkness is made to gather around the Khalsa. They will not be transformed into plant tools of the Hindu priviligentia, as is hoped."*



Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh, National Professor of Sikhism, with his only son, Dr. Inder Jit Singh, now, on deputation with the World Bank as a Senior Economist.

CONCLUSION

"The demand for Sikh Homeland is the un-fulfilled desire of the Sikhs to be sovereign."

(DARA SINGH)

The resolutions passed on July 10, 66, December 11, 66, October 8, 68, and October 17, 73, the details of which had been furnished in the next Chapter aim at to give more powers to the States, which had been reduced to the level of the Corporations—if not to the Municipal Committees. The propounders of the demand for the Sikh Homeland explain that the proposed Homeland shall consist of the present Punjab State with certain contiguous Punjabi-speaking areas added to it. It shall have the right to frame its own internal Constitution and shall be

Out of the Speech made by S. Kapur Singh at the annual meeting of the All India Sikh Students Association held on August 23, 1968, at Gandhi Bhavan, punjab University, Chandingarh.

granted an autonomous constitutional status similar to the one granted to the State of Jammu and Kashmir in the Constitution Act of India as it stood framed in 1950. It shall be an integral part of India and its internal Constitution shall have all the Fundamental Rights embodied in the Indian Constitution plus a few more provisions, as are deemed necessary, to facilitate the preservation and the propagation of the deposits of Sikhism and the Sikh way of life.

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3, 6, 7, 11 to 13. Out of 'Akalis Past and Present' by Mr. Kailash Chander Gulati (Ashajanak Publications)

10. From S. Baldev Singh's Presidential Address. See Tribune dated 29-11-38.

14, 16 and 24. From 'The Transfer of Power' by Mr. V. P. Menon (Orient Longmans).

15. The Simla Triangle by Mr. Ashok Mehta.

17. See Mitra's Register. Cabinet Mission by Mr. A. C, Banerjee and 'The Akalis Past and Present.'

The Princess Bamba Collection
(PRESERVED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN PAKISTAN)



Maharani Jindan

Seated on a thick round cushion in red cloth woven in gold having dark green velvet borders. The Maharani is depicted reclining against a big pillow inside Lahore Fort. (Canvas, 4′—8″ × 3′—9″)

Maharaja Ranjit Singh died in 1839. The Sikh throne was successively occupied by his eldest son Maharaja Kharak Singh (d. 1840); his grandson Maharaja Naunihal Singh (d. 1840) and his second son Maharaja Sher Singh (d. 1843) who were all murdered one after the other by rival factions. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's son Prince Dalip Singh by Rani Jind Kaur, commonly known as Rani Jindan, ascended the throne at the age of six. The Anglo-Sikh wars resulted in ultimate liquidation of the Sikh power, and on 30th March, 1849, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's short-lived kingdom was annexed by the British. Maharaja Dalip Singh was taken away to Fatehgarh in the U. P., and put under the tutelage of Sir John Login of the Bengal Army, with the result that after two years the Young Maharaja expressed a desire to renounce his faith and embrace Christianity. He was baptised, granted a pension, sent to England and given an estate in Suffolk. The Maharaja married Bamba Muller,



Plaster cast of marble bust of H. H. Maharaja Dalip Singh at the age of 18, made by Baron Marochetti, on the orders of Queen Victoria

daughter of European merchant and an Abyssinian mother and it took place in the British Consulate at Alexandria, Egypt.

She bore him Prince Victor Dalip Singh (b. 1866, d. 1918), Prince Fredrick Dalip Sihgh (b. 1886, d. 1926), Princess Bamba Jindan (b. 1869, d. 1957), Princess Katherine, Prince Albert Edward Dalip Singh (b. 1879, d. 1893), and Princess Sophia Alexandra (b. 1874. d. 1948). The children of Maharaja Dalip Singh died issueless. He came to India twice and was reconverted to his paternal faith. In 1886, he made an attempt to leave England for good and settle down in the Punjab, but his attempt failed and he was not allowed to proceed beyond Aden. He did not return to England and died in Paris in 1893. Princess Bamba Jindan Dalip Singh, who later on married an English gentleman, Dr. Southerland, continued to keep in her custody the collection of paintings and objects of arts, belonging to her father. She died in Lahore on March 10, 1957, without having any issue and, thus, with her death ended the line of the Sikh ruling dynasty. She bequeathed the above and the other collections to Pir Karim Bakhsh of Lahore who sold it to the Government of Pakistan.

Courtesy: Department of Archaeology in Pakistan and Capt. Amarjit Singh Jeji of Patiala.

1947

The Bumper year for the Vultures, as man became worse than a beast.

"IF MAN ARE SO WICKED WITH RELIGION, WHAT WOULD THEY BE WITHOUT !"

(Franklin)

THE HUMANITY WEPT THE TEARS OF BLOOD IN 1947

"Bas ke dushwar hai har
kaam ka asan hona
Addmi ko bhi mayassar
nahin insaan hona" (Ghalib)
("How difficult can an easy task
prove to be ! Even man is not
fated to be a human being.")

In the Convention held by the Muslim League from 7th to 9th April, 1946, in Delhi, open threats were made that in case Pakistan was not conceded, a catastrophic situation was bound to be set in. Sir Feroze Khan Noon went to the extent of saying that "if the British forced on us an *Akhand* (united) government, the destruction and havoc which Muslims will cause will put to shame the deeds of Halaku Khan and Chengiz Khan and the responsibility for this will be Britain's." That Convention was attended by Gyani Kartar Singh as an observer.

"DIRECT ACTION"

"The rejection of Pakistan by the Cabinet Mission left the All India Muslim League frustrated. It had been able to sweep the Muslim electorates in most parts of India in the 1945-46 elections. But excepting for Bengal, the League was not able to form a Government in any of the provinces, not even in the proposed Pakistan areas of Western India . . In the Punjab, the League although the largest single party, could not form a ministry, as it could not satisfy any of the smaller groups so as to have a majority in the Legislature. In Punjab, therefore, a coalition Ministry under Sir Khizar Hayat Khan was formed early in 1945 and continued till 1947. The Punjab Ministry was supported by the Unionist Party, the

Congress and the Panthic Sikh party and had an average strength of 92 against the Muslim League's 78. The political events of 1946 did not indicate that Mr. Jinnah was making any real headway with Pakistan particularly after the rejection of the proposition by the Cabinet Mission.

Having failed to secure Pakistan by peaceful and constitutional means, the leaders of the Muslim League including Mr. Jinnah sought to obtain their objectives by other means, comprehensively, described by them as "Direct Action." (1)

On July 27, 1946, the Muslim League decided to resort to "Direct Action" and passed the resolutions: "Whereas the League has today resolved to the proposals embodied in the statement of the Cabinet Delegation and the viceroy of May 16, 1946, due to the in transigence of the Congress on the one hand and the breach of faith with the Mulsims by the British Government on the other; and whereas Muslim India has exhausted without success all efforts to find a peaceful solution of the Indian problem by compromise and constitutional means; and whereas the Congress is bent upon setting up a Caste Hindu Raj in India with the connivance of the British; and whereas recent events have shown that power politics and not justice and fair play are the deciding factors in Indian affairs; whereas it has become abundantly clear that the Muslims of India would not rest content with anything less than the immediate establishment of an independent and fully sovereign State of Pakistan and would resist any attempt to impose any constitution, long-term or short-term, or setting up of any Interim Government at the Centre without the "approval and consent of the Muslim League, the Council of the All-India Muslim League is convinced that the time has now come for the Muslim nation to resort to direct action to vindicate their honour and to get rid of the present slavery under the British and contemplated future of Caste Hindu domination."..."This Conncil directs the Working Committee to prepare forthwith a programme of direct aciton to carry out the policy initiated above and to organise the Muslims for the coming struggle to be launched as and wben necessary."

Immediately after the resolutions were passed. Mr. Jinnah declared amid cheers: "What we have done today is the most historic in our history. Never have we in the whole history of the League done anything except by constitutional methods. But now we are forced into this position. Today we bid good bye to constitutional methods." On 29/7, the Muslim League rejected the 'Scheme' put forward by the Cabinet

Mission and on the same day, the League turned to 'Direct Action' and the "sequel to all this was the unprecedented holocaust in Calcutta where for four or five days beginning from August 16, riot, murder, arson and pillage were rampant involving huge damage to life and property."

A Munajat for the Jehad

(Prayer for the crusade to be read at every mosque after the Friday Prayer)

The Muslim leaders called upon every Muslim to say this prayer at every mosque after the Jumma (Friday) prayers : "It was in this month of Ramzan that the Holy Quran was revealed. It was in this month of Ramzan that 313 Muslims were victorious through the grace of God over many Kafirs in the battle of Badr and the *Jehad* of the Muslims commenced. It was in this month that ten thousand Muslims marched to Mecca and were conquerors and thus there was the establishment of the Kingdom of Islam...By the grace of God we are ten crores in India but through bad luck we have become slaves of the Hindus and the British. We are starting *Jehad* in Your Name in this very month of Ramzan. We promise before You that we entirely depend upon You. Pray make us strong in body and mind—give Your helping hand in all our actions—make us victorious over the Kafers—enable us to establish the Kingdom of Islam in India and make proper sacrifices for this Jehad—by the grace of God may we build up in India the greatest Islamic Kingdom in the world."[2]

HOW CAN THE MUSLIMS BE RULED BY KAFERS* ?

(Jinnah.)

A leaflet bearing a picture of Mr. Jinnah with a sword in hand, said :—

"The sword of Islam must be shining on the heavens and will subdue all evil designs......We Muslims have had the crown and have ruled. Do not lose heart. Be ready and take your swords. Think you, Muslims, why we are under the Kafirs today. The result of loving the kafirs is not good. O Kafir ! Do not be proud and happy. Your doom is not far and the general massacre will come. We shall show our glory with swords in hands and will have a special victory.

Another leaflet asked the Muslims to come into the arena with their swords and change their tactics. We shall then see who will play

*Infidel.

with us, for rivers of blood will flow. We shall have the swords in our hands and the noise of *takbir*. Tomorrow will be doom's day." (3).

RESIGNATION OF SIR KHIZR HAYAT KHAN TIWANA

The Interim Government took office on October 26, 1946, and after Muslim League's participation it was reconstituted with Jawaharlal Nehru as the Vice-President of the Executive Council and Vallabhbhai Patel, Baldev Singh, John Matthai, C. Rajagopalachari, C. H. Bhabha, Rajendra Prasad, Asaf Ali, Jagjivan Ram, Liaqat Ali Khan, I. I. Chundrigar, Abdur Rab Nishatar, Ghazanfar Ali Khan, and Jogendra Nath Mandal as the other members.

When the Muslim League participated in the working of the Interim Government, the Viceroy wanted Jinnah to join the Constituent Assembly, but he was evasive. The Muslim League refused to accept



Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh (1878-1961). He indoctrinated thousands of people with the Sikh religion and Sikh way of life through his ideal living, preachings and kirtan. S. Bhagat Singh was so much influenced by Bhai Sahibs' life in the Central Jail, Lahore, where both of them were lodged, that he started wearing long hair and beard.

Nehru as the Leader. On November 25, 1946, the British Cabinet invited Viceroy Lord Waivell and 5 members of the Interim Government consisting of 2 members each belonging to the Congress and the Muslim League and the 5th, a Sikh Member, to England for sorting out the differences regarding the interpretation of the grouping clause in the Cabinet Mission Scheme. Pt. Nehru, S. Baldev Singh, Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan together with viceroy arrived in London on 2/12, but no agreement could be arrived at despite long discussions. The Constituent Assembly met on December 9, but the Muslim League did not join it while the Sikhs wanted the procedural safeguards in Section B, similar

to those conceded to the Muslims in the Union Constituent Assembly and started concentrating for finalising the scheme of Punjab's partition. From 1920 till the death Sir Sikendar Hayat Khan in 1942, the general consensus of opinion among the Muslims was that the ideal solution was to keep Punjab united, but after the death of Sir Sikendar and the disintegration of the Unionists' party, the slogan for Pakistan began to gain an increasing hold on the Muslim population. Because of the making of the Coalition Ministry, headed by Sir Khizr Hayat Khan and backed by both the Hindus and Sikhs, and the failure of the Muslim League to have its own Ministry, there was a great resentment in the League against the Punjab Government against which provocative slogans like "Leyke raehngey Pakistan—Jaise liya tha Hindustan (We will take Pakistan just as we once took Hindustan). Khizr kanjar Hai Hai (Khizr, the procurer is dead O Sorrow). Pakistan Zindabad (Long live Pakistan). Unionists Murdabad (Death to the Unionist party), etc." were shouted.



Sir Sikendar Hayat Khan



Khizer Hayat Khan Tiwana

The opposition against the Ministry was so intense and bitter that the Punjab Government was compelled to declare Muslim National Guards along with Rashtriaya Sewayam Sangh as unlawful bodies. However, when Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan declared that the National Guards were a part and parcel of the Muslim League and an attack on them would be

deemed an attack on the League, the ban was withdrawn. By the third week of February, 1947, the communal situation had become serious, particularly in Gujrat and some districts of Punjab. By that time, the Hindus and the Sikhs had come to realise that their safety lay in the creation of a separate province for themselves. Finding the Punjab affairs going out control, Sir Khizr Hayat Khan resigned on March 2, 1947. "The Muslim League was triumphant and celebrated the occasion by illuminating their houses and business premises in the evening. Crowds began to roam about the streets shouting Leauge slogans and congratulating Khizr on having displayed so much wisdom and good sense. Khizr, the today– the procurer and butcher was transformed overnight in a dear brother. Young boys stopped passers-by on the road and asked them. Have you heard the latest ? Khizr is our brother."4

MASTER TARA SINGH TOOK OUT HIS SWORD AND SHOUTED "PAKISTAN MURDABAD".

On March 3, 1947, the Governor invited Khan of Mamdot for forming his Ministry but the non-Muslim Parties were opposed to the



This picture relates to 1917. First Row (Sitting) : L to R S. Lal Singh Kamla Akali, Master Tara Singh, Sant Teja Singh of Mastuana; Giani Gurmukh Singh Musaffir is seen standing on the extreme left in the last row.

formation of the League Ministry. S. Swaran Singh and Shri Bhim Sain Sachhar, the leaders of Akali Panthic Party, and the Punjab Assembly Congress Party respectively, favoured United India and declared that in no case, they would submit to any Government based on communal or sectional domination. Master stated that a grave situation had arisen and the Sikhs were determined to hold their own and the establishment of the Pakistan in any form would be opposed and fought to tooth. "The members of the Panthic (Akali) Assembly Party assembled and held an urgent meeting in which Master was invited who said that the formation of the League Ministry must be opposed at every cost as its formation was calculated to create Pakistan to whom Muslims termed as their Homeland. While coming from the Assembly building Masterji along with Sardars Ujjal Singh, Swaran Singh. Ishar Singh Majhail, Udham Singh Nagoke, Dalip Singh Kang and Kartar Singh (Giani) raised the slogans "Pakistan Muradabad and Sat Sri Akal." Mr. G. D. Khosla wrote about that event in these words : "They (the members of the Panthic Assembly Party) held a joint meeting in the Assembly chamber and discussed the situation. A large crowd of Muslims who had collected outside kept up a continuous barrage of provocative Muslim League slogans. They said that they would take Pakistan by force, if necessary. As soon as the meeting was over, Master Tara Singh and a number of Sikh and Congress leaders came out of the Assembly Chamber. Master Tara Singh stood on stairs facing the hostile Muslim crowd and taking out his kirpan flourished it in front of him. He shouted "Kat ke deynge apni jan maggar nahin deynge Pakistan' (We shall kill overselves and give you our lives but will never concede Pakistan)." The Tribune dated March 4, reported that when the above members came out, a hostile Muslim crowd confronted them and demonstrated against the members but owing to the persuasions of Mian Ifkhtiar Ud Din and Mr. Mumtaz Daultana, the crowd dispersed. Masterji talked of forming Akali Fauz (Army). The same evening, a very mammoth Public meeting was organized by the Lahore District Congress Committee at Kapurthala Bagh in Lahore, in which Com. Ram Chandra, Masterji, Mr.Bhargava, Mr. Krishan Gopal Datt, S. Kairon, and Ch. Lehri Singh spoke. Resentment was expressed that a political domination by a ruling majority and the establishment of Pakistan would not be tolerated and the Governor's action was condemned for having helped the Muslim League against the Coalition Ministry. Masterji made 'Live or Die' Appeal to his community declaring: "Let the Sikh Panth realise the gravity of the situation. I expect every Sikh to do his duty. We shall live or die but not submit to Muslim domination. Khalsa rise and gird up your loins.

The most momentous hour has approached. May God be our guide and guard us!" The Governor was constrained to take over the administration under Section 93 of the Govt. of India Act, 1935, and it continued upto the transfer of power.

"VERILY, ONLY A THIN LINE DIVIDES THE MAN FROM THE BEAST, AND ORDER FROM CHAOS."

From March 4, 1947, the riots, arson, murders, rapes, and looting started and in "the nine months between August 1947 and the spring of the following year, between fourteen and sixteen million Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were forced to leave their homes and flee to safety from blood—crazed mobs. In that same period over 600,000 of them were killed. But no, not just killed. If they were children, they were picked up by the feet and their heads smashed against the wall. If they were female children, they were raped. If they were girls, they were raped and then their breasts were chopped off. And if they were pregnant, they were disembowelled.

It was a period in India's history when India's women in the Punjab and the United Provinces and Bihar were reminded of a useful hint handed down through harems and women's quarters from the time of the Moghuls—that the way to avoid pregnancy as a result of being raped is to struggle, always to struggle.



Muslim refugees crowding a train leaving New Delhi for Pakistan. Courtesy: 'The Last Days of British Raj.'

It was a time when trains were arriving in Lahore Station packed with passengers, all of them dead, with messages scribbled on the sides of the carriages reading: 'A present from India'. So, of course, the Muslims sent back trainloads of butchered Sikhs and Hindus with the message: 'A present from Pakistan.' In a land, which, under Gandhi, had adopted as a national religion the cult of *ahimsa* and non-violence there took place murder, looting, burning and raping such as the world has not seen since the days of Jenghis Khan. 'Freedom must not stink!' cried an Indian journalist in a famous pamphlet issued at the time. But all India stank—with the stench of countless thousands of dead bodies, with the stench of evil deeds, with the stench of fires.

India in 1947 was a bumper year for vultures. They had no need to look for rotting flesh for it was all around them, animal and human. One convoy of Sikhs and Hindus from West Punjab was 74 miles long, and the raiders who attacked it constantly en route did not need to watch for it: they could smell its coming, for it was riddled with cholera and other foul diseases. And such was its mood that, upon sighting a long Muslim convoy of refugees coming the other way, the able-bodied members of the Indian convoy set off to do some killing of their own.

If the Sikhs were sullen and vicious before independence, they became mad with rage after the announcement of the Boundary Awards on 17 August. It was worse even than they had feared. Their lands, their canals, their, homes in the rich and fertile West would all be within the boundaries of the hated Pakistan. They reacted in a monstrous reflex action, an ejaculation of berserk fury in which they cut down every Muslim in sight and vowed to kill them, but not too quickly. Sikh leaders and Sikh princes joined in exhorting their unhappy followers to do more extravagant excesses.

Both sides had signed on 20 July, at Mountbatten's behest, a declaration that they would respect the rights of minorities. But Mountbatten was right in suspecting that they did not know what they were signing. The Sikh policy was to exterminate the Muslims in their midst. The Muslims, with their eyes on the rich Sikh farmlands, were content to drive the Sikhs out and only massacre those insisted on remaining. It is sad to have to admit that in their deliberate disobedience of their signed pledge they were encouraged by the British Governor of West Punjab, Sir Francis Mudie, who wrote to Mr. Jinnah on 5 September. 1957: 'I am telling everyone that I don't care how the Sikhs get across the border: the great thing is to get rid of them as soon as possible. 600,000 dead, 14,000,000 driven from their homes. '100,000 young girls

kidnapped by both sides, forcibly converted or sold on the auction block.[5]

"The great upheaval which shook India from one and to the other during a period of about fifteen months commencing with August 16, 1946, was an event of unprecedented magnitude and horror. History has not known a fratricidal wars of such dimensions in which human hatred and bestial passions were degraded to the levels witnessed during this dark epoch when religious frenzy, taking the shape of a hideous, monster, stalked through cities, towns and country side, taking a toll of half a million innocent lives. Decrepit old men, defenceless women, helpless young children, infants in arms, by the thousand, were brutally done to death by Muslim, Hindu and Sikh fanatics. Destruction and looting of property, kidnapping and ravishing of women, unspeakable atrocities and indescribable inhumanities were perpetrated in the name of religion and patriotism. To be a Hindu, Sikh or a Muslim became a crime punishable with death. Madness swept over the entire land, in an ever-increasing crescendo, till reason and sanity left the minds of rational men and women, and sorrow, misery, hatred, despair took possession of their souls. A Sikh or a Hindu dared not show his face in the place where he and his fore-fathers had lived for centuries, and a Muslim was forced to abandon his native soil, his home and his property."(6)

The story as to how the two Communities—Hindus and Muslims—and the latter consisting of more than 90% converts from Hinduism with the same stock race, culture and geographical entity, with little difference in appearance or dress, observing almost the same religious ceremonies and behaving as the members of the same society becamc the ruthless, barbarous, and brutal enemies of each other and that too with fraticidal madness and worst type of fanaticism, is, indeed, staggering and harrowing. On March 4, 1947, the Police opened fire in Lahore on Hindu and Sikh students injuring 125 and killing 10 students including Rattan Chand, a D. A. V. College student, at the spot culminating into the imposition of curfew. On 5/3, Masterji appealed to Hindus and Sikhs to unite and make the formation of the Muslim League Ministry impossible and to observe March 11, as 'Anti-Pakistan Day'. Trains were cancelled, the meetings and the processions were banned in Lahore. The important leaders including Master Tara Singh, Mr. B. S. Sachhar, S. Swaran Singh, Ch. Lehri Singh, and Giani Kartar Singh met at the residence of Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava on 5/3, and Council of Action with Master as the Dictator was formed. "The holocaust in western Pakistan had its repercussions in East Punjab. The streams of fleeing refugees with their

tales of woe and suffering made a profound impression on the people. In vain were appeals made to them to remember that retaliation was no remedy. The spirit of revenge was abroad, working up communal bitterness to a frenzied pitch, till all restraint was thrown to the winds and there ensued a whole-sale attack on Muslims. The trouble spread to Patiala and the East Punjab States and to the western districts of the United Provinces, especially Meerut and Saharanpur, the States of Bharatpur and Alwar, and ultimately to Delhi. The Muslims in these areas now started a mass exodus to the Pakistan border."[7]

"ROLE OF MEN WHICH WILL DEGRADE EVEN THE BRUTE"

The situation in Lahore became critical and military guards and troops were posted at strategic points in the city. The Frontier Mail was attacked at Taxila and 24-hour curfew was imposed at Amritsar which was in ruins with more than 5000 houses destroyed causing a loss about 8 crores. On 13/3, serious situation developed in Rohtak while more than 250 persons were killed in Multan. Because of the serious situation having developed in Hazara District, the troops and constabulary were despatched. About 22 persons were killed in Ludhiana alone on March 15. After visiting Punjab, Pt. Nehru was shocked to see the ghastly scenes and he woefully commented the role of men which degraded even the brute. On 17/3, the SGPC sent a telegram to the Governor for intervention as the Sikhs in Peshawar had been illegally confined for more than a week and that he should come to their rescue. S. Harbans Singh summed up the attitude of the Muslims towards the Sikhs in the booklet 'Sikh Political Parties': "An important part of Mr. Jinnah's political strategy was a deliberate and studious disregard of the Sikhs. Muslims knew that the Sikhs were the greatest practical hurdle in the way of Pakistan. They had, therefore, secretly planned their extermination, which was a part of their general scheme of violence and intimidation put into operation in Calcutta first." On 21/3, the Punjab Government Home Secretary, Mr. A. A. Macdoneld admitted that upto mid-day of 19/3,2049 persons had died and 11038 were injured. On 23/3, more than 4000 Hindus and Sikhs were killed in Pindi, Attock and Jhelum districts and on the same day the communal clashes in Delhi reached its peak



S. Jaswant Singh Raz, a Sikh Urdu and a Panthic poet of repute and the author of 'Pnnjab ki Tareekh ka khuni Work' which depicts the staggering and harrowing story of the partition days when men became worse than beasts.

and curfew was imposed.

3RD JUNE PLAN

On May 17, 1947, the Viceroy advised the British Government to withdraw from India forthwith, while May 21, was the day when Mr. Jinnah demanded a 'corridor' to link West and East Pakistan which demand was characterized as fantastic and absurd by Pt. Nehru and the other Congress leaders. On June 1, the Viceroy invited Pt. Nehru, S. Patel and Mr. Kriplani from the Congress, Mr. Jinnah, Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan, and Abdur Rab Nishtar from the Muslim League and S. Baldev Singh from the Sikhs at a meeting to be held on 2/6, at his residence at 10.00 A. M. All the 7 leaders held discussions with the Viceroy on June 2 and 3. "Immediately after his meeting with the party leaders the Viceroy communicated to the Secretary of State the assurances given



Picture relates to June 2, 1947, when seven leaders—Nehru, Patel and Kirpalani on behalf of the Congress; Jinnah, Liaqat Ali Khan and Abdul Rab Nishtar on behalf of the League and Baldev Singh representing the Sikhs held the historic Conference at the Viceroy's house.

to him by Nehru, Jinnah and Baldev Singh in regard to the acceptance of the plan. Attlee announced the plan in the House of Commons on 3 June, hence, it came to be known as 'the June 3rd plan'." 8. According to that plan, two Boundary Commissions for the partition of Bengal and Punjab were set up on June 30. The Punjab Boundary Commission consisted of Justices Mehar Chand Mahajan, Teja Singh, Din Mohomed Munir with Sir Cyril Redcliffe, a most brilliant lawyer at the English Bar, as the Chairman of both the Commissions.

Partition Plan Accepted

On the evening of 3/6, the Viceroy Mountbettan, Pt. Nehru, Mr. Jinnah and S. Baldev Singh broadcast to the people of India and S. Baldev Singh said, the plan "does not please everybody, not the Sikhs community anyway, but it is certainly something worthwhile." The Sikh leaders very sharply reacted to the plan. On 3/6, Master made a statement after the informal meeting among Swaran Singh, Bawa Harkishan Singh, Ujjal Singh and Master himself had concluded that the plan lacked positive provisions for giving power and status to the Sikhs. On 4/6, Jaswant Singh Duggal characterized the British plan as highly unjust, uncheritable and ungrateful to the Sikhs. On 9/6, Master gave the interview to the Tribune correspondent, who reported : "He (Master) could not welcome the new plan of His Majesty Government but he was not in favour of boycott. Sikhs could work it. He appreciated the sincerity with which Lord Mountbetten worked. He wanted Chenab to be the boundary line and wanted areas of Montgumri, Layalpur, Gurdaspur, Lahore to be included in the Eastern Punjab because the Sikhs had large holdings in these areas and in all fairness, he said, Nankana Sahib should also be with the Sikh Homeland. Asked about the Capital, he said, "Amritsar." The Sikh Conference held in the second week of June resolved : "While accepting the principle of partition of Punjab, the Sikh community will not accept any partition of the province which does not preserve their solidarity and integrity. Basis of the national division of the province is inequitable and unjust, to the Sikhs and the plan is designed to carve about a sovereign Muslim State to satisfy the Muslim demands and it fails to provide for the Sikhs any position of power or status or any means for the protection of their interests in the constitutional making machinery. The Sikhs, therefore, feel perturbed that according to His Majesty's plan, they are likely to be split up into two Sovereign States. The conference resolved that any plan of partition which does not preserve the Sikh solidarity and integrity shall not be acceptable to them." The Akali Dal's President, Giani Kartar Singh, stated on 16/6: "The latest plan of partition of Punjab was unacceptable to the Sikhs and they wanted a separate Homeland where they could develop their culture and preserve their entity. Though the plan concedes the demand of thc Sikhs for partition but it was unaccepatable to them in the present form as they have been persistently demanding a separate Homeland. We want to preserve our solidarity at every cost and we do not want the change of masters of passing us under the subjugation of either the Hindus or the Muslims. The partition plan will divide the Sikhs into two parts and we are determined to secure our homeland even if we have to be engaged into another struggle."

On July 19, there was all-Parties Sikh Convention held at New Delhi, and it assured the Akali Dal of its support and demanded a clean and definite provision for compulsory exchange of population and property left in Pakistan. Gurmukh Nihal Singh, Uttam Singh Duggal, Master Mota Singh and Gurmukh Singh Musafir were the main speakers.

At a meeting on July 22, 1947, the members of the Partition Council decided to issue the statement according to which the decision to set up two independent Dominions from August 15 was finally taken and the members of the Partition Council on behalf of the future Governments declared their determination "to establish peaceful conditions in which the processes of partition may be completed and the many urgent tasks of administration and economic reconstruction be taken in hand" and "to accept the awards the Boundary Commissions whatever they might be, and, as soon as they were annonnced, to enforce them impartially."

On July 27, more than 10,000 Sikhs gathered in Gurdwara Nankana Sahib under the Presidentship of Dalip Singh Kang, M. L. A. The Conference resolved that Nankana Sahib and its surrounding areas must be included in East Punjab.

THE DIVISION OF PUNJAB.

Before the Boundary Commission, "the claims of the respective parties ranged over a wide territory, the truly debatable ground in the end proved to lie in and around the area between the Beas and Sutlej rivers on the one hand and the river Ravi on the other. Here the fixing of a boundary was complicated by the existence of vital canal systems and road-and-rail communications predicated on a single administration. There was also the stubborn geographical fact of the respective situations of Lahore and Amritsar, and the claims to each or both of those cities which either side vigorously sustained."[9]

Sir Cyril, who had arrived in India on 8th July, sent the reports (awards about partition of Bengal and Punjab) to the office of Viceroy on 13/8, and the meeting to discuss the above reports was held at 5 P. M. on 16/8, the copies of the same having been sent to the participants 3 hours earlier. "The atmosphere was one of mutual indignation and protest. Neither the Congress leaders, nor the Muslims, nor Sardar Baldev Singh for the Sikhs, were in the least appreciative of any good they might have found in the awards; they could only complain bitterly of their defects. After some time, however, they perceived that there must be some merits when their rivals were equally dissatisfied, and after two

hours' debate the conclusion was reached that the awards must be announced forthwith and loyally implemented.''[10]

"The Radcliffe Punjab's award allocated to East Punjab only thirteen districts, comprising the whole of the Jullundur and Ambala divisions, the Amritsar district of the Lahore division and certain tehsils of the Gurdaspur and Lahore division districts. East Punjab obtained control over three of the five rivers of the united Punjab, namely the Beas, Sutlej and the upper waters of the Ravi. About thirty-eight per cent of the area and forty-five per cent of the population were assigned to East Punjab. West Punjab, on the other hand, obtained under the award about sixty-two per cent of the area and fifty-five per cent of the population, together with a major percentage of the income of the old province. The non-Muslims of the Punjab, especially the Sikhs, bitterly resented the loss of Lahore and the canal colonies of Sheikhupura, Layallpur and Montgomery, while the Muslims protested against the retention of the Mandi hydro-electric Project by East Punjab and the serverance of certain tehsils from the notional West Punjab."[11]

"The division of the Punjab was given effect to on the mid-night of the 14th and 15th of August, 1947, although the Award of the Boundary Commission was not announced till two days later. The terms of the Award caused a great deal of disappointment and frustration. The Sikhs made no secret of the resentment they felt at losing their historic shrines and almost the entire rich colony area. They felt that the division of their community into two halves would result in the lowering of their political status in both parts of the Punjab. The Muslims had also lost some areas in which they had a majority of population. The loss of Lahore and the consequent deprivation of a large number of cultural and educational institutions of their property and wealth was keenly felt by the Hindus. At the same time, partition brought a certain measure of relief, for the non-Muslims in East Punjab felt that they had gained independence, though at a terrible cost. The feeling grew that Hindus and Sikhs could now retaliate with impunity and avenge some, at least, of the wrongs suffered at the hands of the Muslims in West Punjab."[12]

"BLOOD FLOWED AND FIRE RAGED."

"The Governor, after rehearsing the political events which had led to the breakdown of responsible parliamentary government in the Punjab and his own assumption of power under Section 93 on 4th March, wrote

(to Lord Mountbetten) that the disturbances since that date had fallen into three main phases.

Phase One, from 4th to 20th March, was characterised by rioting in the cities, including Lahore, Amritsar, Multan and Rawalpindi, and massacres of Sikhs and Hindus in rural areas of the Rawalpindi Division and Multan District, with very heavy casualties and much burning, especially in Multan and Amritsar. The urban slaughter was without precedent (in Multan City about 130 non-Muslims were killed in three hours) and the wholesale burnings and rural massacres were new, but on the whole, the situation was akin to communal disturbances of the past and yielded to well-tried counter-action, order being restored everywhere by 20th March. (This was the situation which Lord Mountbetten inherited from Lord Wavell's period.)

In Phase Two, upto 9th May, there were minor incidents in many districts, serious rioting and burning in Amritsar in mid-April with repercussions in Lahore, and the first outbreaks in Gurgaon. This period of relative quiet was used by the communities for preparations, and there was much practising with bombs.

Phase Three, from 10th May onwards, launched the 'communal war of succession'. Lahore and Amritsar suffered much incendiarism, stabbing and bombing. There was scarcely any urban rioting, all activities in the cities, including some organised raids, being conducted by 'cloak and



The first Prime Minister of India being sworn in by Lord Mountbatten on August 15, 1947.

dagger' methods. Village raiding began, and grave disturbances broke out again in Gurgaon, with very heavy casualties.

The third phase (wrote the Governor) showed the real dimensions of the problem. The communities settled down to do the maximum amount of damage to one another while exposing the minimum expanse of surface to the troops and police. Mass terrorism of this kind offers no easy answer—troops and police can act, and sometimes act decisively—against riotous mobs; they can do little against burning, stabbing and bombing by individuals. Nor can all the King's horses and all the King's men prevent—though they may be able to punish—conflict between communities interlocked in villages over wide areas of country...[13]

It is very difficult to give a harrowing account of each day, however, the eye-witness account of Lahore given by Mr. P. C. Chowdhury on the eve of Pakistan deserves attention: "...In short, Lahore is the city of the dead and a complete picture of hell. Those in charge of this hell are so perfect in their jobs and carry out the various items of their jobs with efficiency which is unprecedented." The special respresentative of the "Hindustan Times" who had accompanied Pt. Nehru and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan on their 2,000-mile tour of the affected areas reported: "Murder in the eyes of men, violence in the hearts of officials, misery and starvation on the faces of refugees and a feeling of despair among politicians."

"Towards the end of August, a camp for about six thousand Muslims was set up in Hansi, District Hissar. A sweeping attack on this camp was made by Jats, Rajputs, Sikhs and Banias. The attack lasted for several days and resulted in very heavy loss of Muslim life... A camp for about sixty thousand Muslims was set up at Kurali (Rupar Sub Division). Severe rioting broke out in several parts of Ambala district and the loss of Muslim life was heavy, particularly in the Rupar Sub Division where it is estimated that between ten and twelve thousand Muslims lost their lives." 14

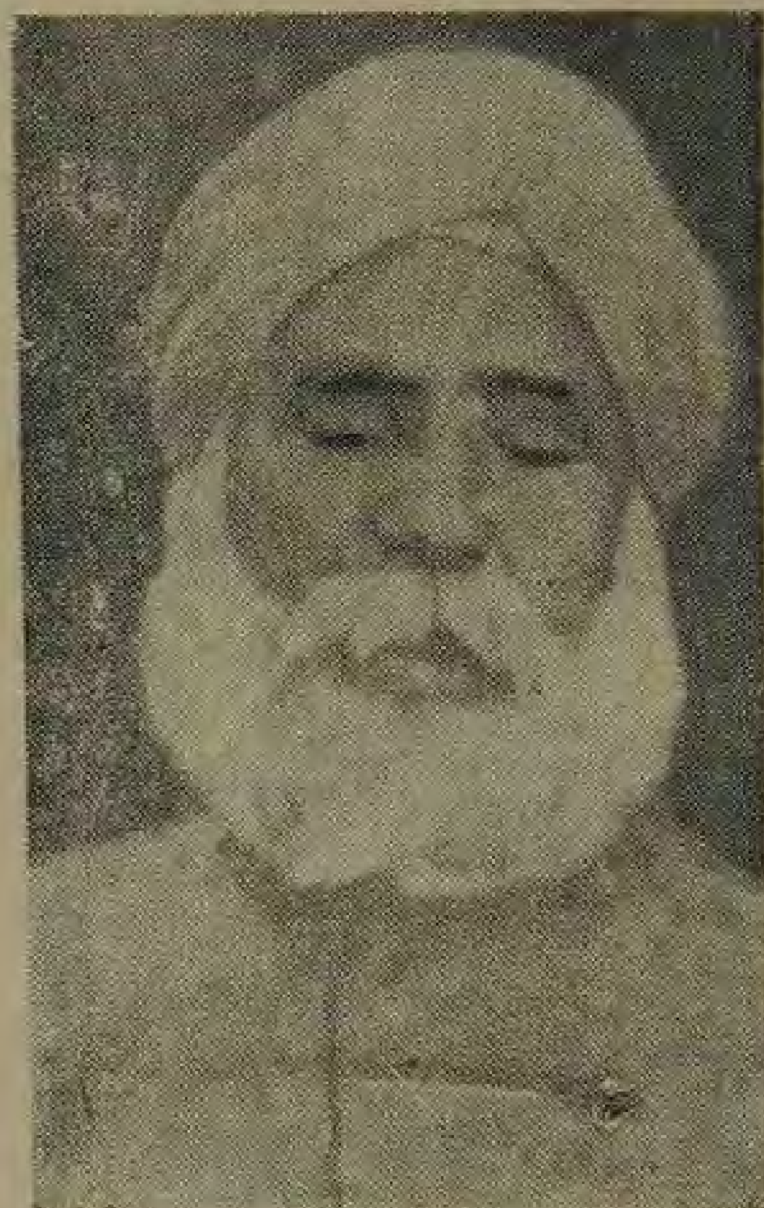
On 25/9, the West Pb. Govt. stopped the movement of convoys of Hindus and Sikhs to India and more than 5,00,000 were held up. The Government had issued orders suspending all evacuation of the refugees from West Punjab to East Punjab and the above Hindus and Sikhs were held up at Balloki Head Works. On 25/9, more than 340 Sikhs and Hindus were killed and 250 were badly injured in Lahore alone on being attacked by the Muslim mob. In Muzaffargarh, the situation was so distressing that more than 300 Sikhs and Hindus were killed. The news-

papers dated 27/9, carried the news that the Muslim convoys consisting of 1,50,000 evacuees crossed to Pakistan territory, while the Hindu and the Sikh convoys were still held up, however, the East Punjab Government allowed them to move out on 26/9. The refugees were without rations and the Government of India dropped food by air. Lahore presented a tragic story as gangsters moved about with gun and pistols leaving no Hindu or Sikh safe. There was no food, no petrol and no escorts, while Amritsar was totally cut off from the rest of the world. The heavy rains hampered the movement of convoys. On 30/9, Dr. Bhargava, the premier, and other Ministers met the Central Government and apprised it about the whole situation. 1500 trucks and two battalions were sent to Pakistan to evacuate the refugees. Strong protest was lodged with Pakistan Government for its holding up the convoys of Hindus and Sikhs. On 1/10, Tandlianwala Refugee Camp was raided and the Hindus and Sikhs suffered big casualties. The Muslim raiders had attacked the camp killing 150 and wounding 46 persons at the spot. On 2/10, there were armed attacks on Hindu and Sikh convoys. The condition in Tandlianwala camp was pitiable. 2,000 Hindu and Sikh refugees were killed at Wah Camp, and 241 women were abducted. On 4/10, four columns of 1,15,000 men started marching towards India. The Muslim raiders attacked the convoys near Jaranwala killing 30 and injuring 20 persons. The conditions became worse as the over-all food situation deteriorated. 5,07,000 refugees were in the camp and lot of people were dying because of starvation. 10,000 Hindus and Sikhs were in great danger at Jhelum when Muslim mob attacked them killing 700 persons at the spot. In the newspaper dated 15/10, the news item appeared that 1,50,000 refugees were living on boiled leaves and the people were dying of hunger and thirst. The Muslim national guards, military and local police joined 10,000 Muslim raiders who attacked Mianwali Camp. It is only on 17/10, that Balloki headworks were opened to traffic with the result that some 50,000 Hindus and Sikhs started marching towards India. By 21/10, the Samundri, Gujjarkhan and Lyallpur Camps were cleared when 400 Sikh convoys passed Balloki headworks. On 29/10, people stood stunned after knowing the details as to how more than 4,000 Hindus and Sikhs were brutally murdered at Jasser Railway Station at the hands of the Muslim raiders.

MURDER OF MAHATMA GANDHI

Before the murder of Mahatma Gandhi, the war in Kashmir was successfully fought by the Indians. The way the Sikhs particularly the

Patiala 1st Sikh Regiment* played a heroic role deserves to be mentioned in the letters of gold. Because of the communal riots Mahatma Gandhi's soul started bleeding and on 12-1-48, he announced at his prayer meeting



Giani Sher Singh (1884—1944). He, though totally blind, was a great philosopher, thinker, and a wonderful orator. His speeches were full of simile, alliteration, metaphor, personification, and oxymoron. He was gifted with photographic memory. He remained the leader of the Central Akali Dal and his contribution to the Akali Movement had been tremendous.

in Delhi that he would fast for Hindu—Muslim unity and that the fast was to commence on 13/1, at 9.30 A. M. He stated that he would rather die than see destruction of India. On 13/1, Maharaja Patiala appealed for unity and called on the Mahatma. He called upon the Sikh organisations to help maintain unity and appealed that Gandhi's life must be saved at all costs. On behalf of the Sikhs, he assured that supreme efforts would be made to preserve peace and harmony among the different communities of the country. The Mahatma started his fast on 13/1, and stated that he would break it only if the conditions became peaceful. On the 17/1, the Mahatma laid down 7 conditions, the fulfilment of which could end his fast. The Peace Committee consisting of 130 persons with Dr. Rajindra Prasad, the President of the Congress, as the Head was formed. It addressed itself to comply with the Mahatma's conditions. On the assurance of the Committee, Mahatma Gandhi

*The service rendered to India by the Patiala troops in Kashmir in October-November 1947 shall remain writ large on the pages of history. The tribal Pathans from the north-west aided by regular Pakistan troops had attacked the valley. The procrastination of the Dogra ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, had laid his subjects open to arson, bloodshed, loot and rape by the Pakistanis. Soon after he had signed on October 26, 1947, the Instrument of Accession to India, the 1st Sikh Regiment was flown to defend the State. These brave sons of Punjab were able to check the advance of the Pakistanis. Then more Indian troops arrived, and in due course of time the valley of Kashmir was saved for India. 15

broke his fast on January 18. On 30-11-948, Mahātma Gandhi was shot thrice at a point blank range by N. R. Godse.

On 3-2-48, the Government of India passed 2 resolutions announcing that no organisation preaching violence and no private army would henceforth be permitted. The leaders and the workers of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh were arrested all over the country. The above organisations passed resolutions suspending their political activities. The murder of Gandhi Ji obviously immortalised him and his "finest hours had been in the last months of his life."

CONGRESS AKALI MERGER (1948)

The Akali Dal contested the 1946—general elections to the Punjab Legislature on its own ticket. The Congress Party won 51 seats, while the Akali Dal had secured 23 out of 33 seats reserved for the Sikhs. After independence, the above Congress and Akali representatives along with another group of about six Hindu and Sikh members, constituted the Legislature for that part of the Punjab which fell to India's share. Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava became the premier after the Congress Party assumed power in the State. Immediately after the independence, one of the two factions of the Akali Dal had joined the Congress Party and it included Udham Singh Nagoke, Ishar Singh Majhail and Swaran Singh. One of the wings of Akali Dal led by Master Tara Singh was opposed to the merger between the Congress and the Akalis. This was quite clear from the directions issued by the Dal's office on 23-2-48, calling upon the Panthic M. L. As, not to join the Congress. S. Baldev Singh was of the view that the Akalis could not have an effective say in the Government unless they reached some understanding with the Congress. He, therefore, took the initiative for starting a dialogue with Master on the question of merger and, eventually, the Working Committee of the Akali Dal met at his residence in Delhi on 17-3-48. It was attended by all the members and the Sikh leaders including Master, Baldev Singh, Kartar Singh (Giani), Majhail, Nagoke, and Bachittar Singh (Bawa). The resolution read : "Whereas the Congress is committed by its resolution of 1929 to give the Sikhs full satisfaction in the matter of communal safeguards affecting them and whereas the minority advisory committee has appointed a High Power Small Committee of among others Dr. Rajinder Parshad Congress President, Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel and whereas the right course for the Sikhs is to trust the sense of fairness and generosity of these big personalities, the meeting of the Working Committee of the

Shiromani Akali Dal after due deliberations resolves that all Members of Panthic Akali Party both at the centre and in the East Punjab are advised to join the Congress Assembly Parties fortwith."

Mr. Bhim Sen Sachar, M.L.A. strongly indicted Dr. Bhargava for having reached a 'secret pact' with Panthic M.L.As. According to him, the 'Pact' was based on communal lines, therefore, it violated the principle of nationalism. Master was not in favour of the merger, however, he acquiesced for the sake of unity in the Sikh Panth. On 18/3, all the Panthic M.L.As merged with the Congress pledging unconditional support to it, but the Dal was not to be dissolved as was quite clear from the meeting of the Akali Dal's Working Committee held on 7/4, at the Sikh Missionary College, Amritsar, under the presidentship of S. Amar Singh Dosanjh, the vice-president of the Akali Dal. It was unanimously resolved not to dissolve the Dal. When Giani Kartar Singh came, the proceedings had concluded. Giani's resignation from the presidentship of the Akali Dal was accepted. The Akali members functioned as a separate group under the directions of Giani Kartar Singh. Since the Congress Legislature Party was almost equally divided between the two factions : one led by Mr. Satyapal and the other by Dr. Bhargava, the premier's position became precarious and he became increasingly dependent on the support of the Giani's group to maintain his office.

MOVE FOR KEEPING AKALI DAL'S SEPARATE ENTITY

From the very beginning, Master was indecisive whether the Akali Dal should be merged with Congress or not. However, the persuation by S. Baldev Singh, Bawa Harkishan Singh and Giani Kartar Singh was too strong to be resisted. With the passage of time, Master came around to the view that the Dal's separate entity must be preserved at every cost. On 30-5-48, about 300 members of the general body of the Dal met for 6 hours in Teja Singh Samundri Hall. Master was elected as the Dal's President. He declared that the independent existence of the Panth would be maintained at every cost.

GIANI AND DUTT INDUCTED IN THE BHARGAVA MINISTRY

On 11-6-48, Dr. Bhargava resigned to be invited by the Governor to form a new Ministry. Dr. Bhargava dropped S. Ishar Singh Majhail and Ch. Lehri Singh and in their places, Giani Kartar Singh and Ch. Krishan Gopal Dutt were inducted in the Cabinet which was reconstituted

with Dr. Bhargava, Shri Prithvi Singh Azad, S. Swaran Singh, Capt. Ranjit Singh, Giani Kartar Singh and Ch. Krishan Gopal Dutt as the members. This step had to be taken as Giani Kartar Singh was to be accommodated particularly when he constituted the balancing force between Bhargava and Sachar groups.

AKALI AND CONGRESS DRIFT-APART

On 2-8-48, Master Ji addressed a Press Conference at Delhi and demanded the creation of Punjabi-speaking State. He said that he



On the issue of keeping Akali Dal's separate entity, Giani Kartar Singh resigned from the Dal's presidentship on 7-4-48. Master Tara Singh was elected in his place on 30-5-48. The picture shows Master along with Hukam Singh addressing the Press Conference at Delhi on 2-8-48, in which Punjabi Suba Demand was raised. Ajaib Singh Machakki, Rachhpal Singh, Kehar Singh Vairagi are also seen.

wrote to Dr. Rajindra Prashad, the President of the Constituent Assembly, that the Punjabi Suba should be demarcated on the basis of linguistic principle. The Akalis strongly resented the directive issued by the Central Government to the provincial governments to ignore communal organisations in all matters connected with the administration. Akalis stated. "If the Government circular is true, then we regard it as breach

of faith with minorities who were assured of unfettered existence in free India in the course of negotiations for independence."

On 25-8-48, the differences between the Congress and the Akali Dal assumed a new dimension when Master announced 5 demands which were to be basis of Akali Dal's struggle against the Congress on the questions of : (1) Recruitment of the Sikhs to the Indian Army (2) The formation of Punjabi-speaking State (3) Safeguarding the Sikh rights and interests in Pepsu (4) Introduction of Punjabi as the Court language and its adoption as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges, and (5) Giving of land and property to the refugees according to what they possessed in West Pakistan. Master's speeches became more and more critical of the Congress. The theme of speeches was that the *Khalsa Panth* was not dependent on the loaves and fishes of offices; if Panth came to an end, the whole country would be in danger, therefore, keeping the *Panth* intact was essential and in no case, he was prepared to accept the Hindu dominion in the East Punjab.

MASTER TARA SINGH'S FIRST ARREST AFTER INDEPENDENCE

In the month of March, 1948, a Committee was formed consisting of Pt. Nehru, S. Patel, Dr. Ambedkar, Dr. Rajinder Prasad and Mr. K. M. Munshi relating to the Sikh grievances. Mr. Ram Kumar Luthra's article 'Sikhs claim special treatment' was published in the Tribune on June 25, 1948, where he analysed the Sikh grievances: "Sikhs say what have we gained by the independence? death and destruction; all fruit have gone to Pandits and Lalas and we refuse to be submerged by Hindu Majority and we want special province of our own." According to him, the Sikhs' population in the undivided Punjab was 3757401 (Census Report of 1941) while the population of the Hindus was 6339979 if the Harijans were counted separately and 7932288 if they are counted together and if both the populations are aggregated, the Sikhs' percentage came down to 31 and, therefore, they wanted weightage of 19% to put themselves at par with the non-Sikh elements. The above referred Advisory Committee on minorities with S. Patel as the Chairman held its session on 30/12/48, and it applied its mind to the Sikh demands: (a) Separate Communal Electorate for the Sikhs, (b) Reservation of 50% seats in provincial legislature and 5% in Central Legislature, (c) Reservation of seats in Delhi and U. P., (d) Same privileges for the Scheduled Caste Sikhs as enjoyed by the other Scheduled Castes, and (e) Statutory reservation of a certain proportion of places in the army.

Since the above demands were not being sympathetically considered, the Akali Dal started mobilising the public opinion by addressing meetings, conventions and conferences. The Akali Dal's Working Committee passed a resolution on 15-2-49. to hold a political conference in Delhi on 20/2, where the Sikh grievances relating to the discriminatory treatment given to them was to be voiced. The Prime Minister wanted that for ventilating the grievances, the Siks should adopt methods other than those of holding a conference in Delhi. On the asking of Pt. Nehru, S. Baldev Singh tried his best to persuade Master Ji to postpone the Conference but the only concession which the Akali Dal was prepared to make was to convert the political conference into a religious congregation. On the other hand, the Chief Commissioner of the Delhi Administration clamped ban on assembly of five persons or more. On 19-2-49, when Master Tara Singh was proceeding to Delhi to participate in the Akali Conference, he was detained by the local government near Narela, a few miles from Delhi, under the provisions of Bengal Regulation 3 of 1818. He was taken to Meerut Jail in U. P. The Akalis, thereupon, decided to defy the order prohibiting the holding of the conference and the Jathas from East Punjab, Pepsu, U. P., Bengal and Hyderabad started coming. As scheduled, the conference was held at Gurdwara Rakab Ganj where the Sikh grievances were spot-lighted and Master's arrest was crticised. The conference, attended by more than 7000 persons, resolved that March 2, be observed as protest day against Master Ji's arrest. The Siks were annoyed with the above unwarranted, and unexpected arrest, however, the statement of S. Baldev Singh justifying Master's arrest added insult to the injury. In his statement of 24/2, the Sikhs were asked to stand by the Government and it was stated *inter alia*: "It is true that the mind of the Sikhs has been exercised over some of their constitutional problems, but it is equally true that our Government and leaders have been giving these problems their most anxious consideration and if there has been any delay, it is because of their in-numerable pre-occupations. The country is passing through difficult times internally and externally. The overall problems of security, economic and political are mixed up with myriad questions that claim priority over everything else. Both personally, and through friends, I tried to impress upon Master Tara Singh the need for circumspec-



S. Sarmukh Singh Jhabal. He was the first President of Shiromani Akali Dal elected on December 14, 1920.

tion and patience, and of the danger of inflaming the mass mind in the prevailing circumstances. Unfortunately, I could not succeed with him. No one doubts his sincerity; but that he failed to realise his responsibilities towards the country and the community at this grave juncture is unfortunately too true."

"The first arrest of such a prominent leader as Master Tara Singh in free India, not for any subversive activities but for voicing the views of a minority which felt aggrieved at the calculated ill-treatment being accorded to it, was a tragic irony. But a more bitter irony was that Baldev Singh, an erstwhile Akali, nominee of the Akali Dal in the Central Cabinet, the beneficiary of Sikander-Baldev Singh Pact in support of which the community had put in such a stiff struggle, facing the Punjab Hindus and the Congress, should have let down Master Tara Singh to please his Congress masters. Baldev Singh, thus, set an example in the higher circles of the Sikhs to play the quisling to the Congress and gian advantages and power."16

BHARGO RESIGNS AND SACHAR BECOMES THE CHIEF MINISTER

Giani Kartar Singh went out of the East Punjab Cabinet on 4-4-49, and it appeared that the forces led by Sachar and Giani had combined. There was a requisition of 37 members for convening the Congress Assembly Party for moving a no confidence motion against its leader Dr. Bhargava.

On 5-4, the Governor prorogued the East Punjab Assembly after accepting the advice of the Ministry. It was a see-saw game where Nagoke was siding with Bhargava while Sachar was backed by Giani. On 6-4, Bhargava tendered his resignation and Sachar was elected leader. Capt. Ranjit Singh who opposed Mr. Sachar, got 33, while the latter got 44 votes. Only 3 weeks ago, Dr. Bhargava was unanimously elected as the leader of the House. The difference arose as Giani's party was wanting the ouster of Swaran Singh, a member of Nagoke group, while the other group was angry as Seth Sudarshan was substituted in place of Krishan Gopal Dutt and Sri Ram was taken in place of Prithvi Singh Azad.

On the *Baisakhi* day (13-4-49), the Governor administered the oath to Mr. Sachar, Ch. Lehri Singh, S. Ujjal Singh, Lt. Col. Joginder Singh Mann and Babu Bachan Singh. S/Shri Sri Ram Sharma, Kartar Singh (Chaudhri), Ajit Singh, Narotam Singh, Dalip Singh Kang, and Kidar

Nath Sharma were taken as Deputy Ministers. However, on the instructions of the Congress Parliamentary Board. S/Shri Bhargava, Gurbachan Singh Bajwa and Prithvi Singh Azad were taken as the Ministers on 1974, raising number of the Cabinet Ministers to 7 as Babu Bachan Singh was dropped. Giani Kartar Singh was kept out of the Ministry at the instance of Sardar Patel, who was obviously not happy with him because of the frequent change of sides.

Patel goes anti-Kartar Sri Giani

CHIEF MINISTERS OF PUNJAB SINCE AUGUST 15, 1947

Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava



15 8-47—13-4-49
18-10-49—20-6 51
21-6-64—6-7-64

Sh. Bhim Sen Sachar



13-4-49—18-10-49
17-4-52—23-1-56

S. Partap Singh Kairon



23-1-56—21-6-64

Com. Ram Kishan



6-7-64—5-7-66

Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafir



1-11-66—8-3-67

S. Gurnam Singh



8-3-67—24-11-67
17-2-69—26-3-70

S. Lachhman Singh Gill *S. Parkash Singh Badal* *Giani Zail Singh*



25-11-67—23-8-68 27-3-70—14-6-71 20-6-77— 17-3-72—30-4-77

SHRI BHIM SEN SACHAR

(December 1, 1893—January 17, 1978)

"He was a saint-politician."

(Prithvi Singh Azad)

Shri Bhim Sen Sachar was born at Peshawar on December 1, 1893. He joined the Bar in 1918 and took active part in the 1921—Non-Co-operation Movement. In 1930, he was arrested during the Salt *Satyagraha* Agitation in Gujranwala. He was elected M. L. A. in 1936 on the Congress ticket and became the leader of the Congress Legislature Assembly Party in 1940. He was re-elected in 1945, and was again elected as the Member of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan in 1947. He remained the Finance Minister in the Punjab Ministry from 11-3-46 to 3-3-1947. He was the Governor of Orissa, and later on of Andhra Pradesh. Because of his strong views against the Emergency, he was arrested under MISA on 26-7-75 and was released only on 31-8-75. He was a God-fearing and a soft-spoken Chief Minister. He did a very sincere and vigilant service at all hours to the best of his capacity in solving the problems confronting the State. He was too simple for Kairon who ultimately manoeuvred to oust him from the political arena. With the passage of time, Sachar, a very honest and a straight-forward CM, shall be remembered more and more by the posterity.

INTERESTING AWARD BY CHANAN SINGH ORARA BRINGS UNITY IN THE SGPC

Whosoever controls SGPC evidently controls the Sikh politics. The elections to the SGPC are based upon adult-franchise and every Sikh over the age of 18 years is entitled to vote. In 1948, there were 15 lacs voters and the total seats numbered 166 out of which 132 were elected while 12 were nominated by the States, 4 represented the *Durbars*, 1 was the Head Granthi of Golden Temple, while the remaining 17 were co-opted by 149 members. The period of tenure for which each of the Presidents of the SGPC worked is as under :—

Name of the President of SGPC	Period of Tenure	
	From	To
S. Kharak Singh	2-10-1926	12-10-1930
Master Tara Singh	12-10-1930	17-6-1933
S. Gopal Singh Qaumi	17-6-1933	29-10-1933
S. Partap Singh Shankar	29-10-1933	13-6-1936
Master Tara Singh	13-6-1936	19-11-1944
S. Mohan Singh Nagoke	19-11-1944	28-6-1948
S. Udham Singh Nagoke	28-6-1948	18-3-1950
S. Chanan Singh Orara	18-3-1950	26-11-1950
S. Udham Singh Nagoke	26-11-1950	29-6-1952
Master Nahar Singh	29-6-1952	5-10-1952
S. Pritam Singh Khuranj	5-10-1952	18-1-1954
S. Ishar Singh Majhail	18-1-1954	7-2-1955
Master Tara Singh	7-2-1955	21-5-1955
Bawa Harkishan Singh	21-5-1955	7-7-1955
S. Gian Singh Rarewala	7-7-1955	16-10-1955
Master Tara Singh	16-10-1955	16-11-1958
S. Prem Singh Lalpura	16-11-1958	7-3-1960
Master Tara Singh	7-3-1960	30-4-1960
S. Ajit Singh Bala	30-4-1960	10-3-1961
Master Tara Singh	10-3-1961	11-3-1962
S. Kirpal Singh Chaksherewala	11-3-1962	2-10-1962
Sant Chanan Singh	2-10-1962	6-1-1973
S. Gurcharan Singh Tohra	6-1-1973	

The SGPC was already split up into two groups : one headed by Nagoke and the other by Master. On 26-2-1950, Udham Singh Nagoke, the President of the SGPC appealed for unity and solidarity of the *Panth* and announced that his party agreed to entrust the entire dispute arising out of the SGPC elections, held on November 13 last, to Jathedar Chanan Singh Orara as the arbitrator. The other party also consented. The Jathedar was called upon to decide the whole matter within 15 days. On 18-3, Jathedar Orara gave the award appointing himself as the President of the SGPC in place of S. Nagoke.



Jathedar Chanan Singh Orara, the arbitrator, who passed the award in his own favour. The award established unity in the SGPC at least for some time.

SACHAR FORMULA

On October 2, 1949, Sachar Formula was announced which "provided for a notional division of the province into two zones, a Punjabi zone and a Hindi zone. In the Punjabi zone the medium of instruction was to be Punjabi written in *Gurmukhi* script and in the Hindi zone Hindi in *Devnagri* script. In order to retain the bilingual character of the province the formula provided for a compulsory learning of both languages in each zone with Punjabi as the second compulsory language in the Hindi zone and Hindi as the second compulsory language in the Punjabi zone. The learning of teaching of the second compulsory language was to start from the last class of the primary department and to continue up to the matriculation stage. The Punjabi zone of the carving of the Sachar Formula consisted of the districts of Amritsar, Jullundur, Gurdaspur, Ferozepore, Ludhiana and Hoshiarpur, all the portions of Hissar district lying to the east of Ferozepore and Patiala side of the Ghaggar River and Rupar and Kharar Tehsils of Ambala district. To the Hindi zone were assigned the districts of Gurgaon, Rohtak, Karnal, all portions of Hissar district lying to the south of Ghaggar River and Jagadhri and Naraingarh tehsils of Ambala district and Kangra." (17)

"The importance of the Sachar Formula lay in the fact that the government accepted the Akali claim that the Punjab could be demarcated into Hindi-speaking and Punjabi-speaking regions. In its origin, the Sachar Formula sought to settle the problem of the medium of instruction in public schools. It provided that Punjabi in *Gurmukhi* script and Hindi in *Devnagri* script should be the regional languages of the Punjabi-speaking and Hindi-speaking areas, respectively which areas were to be demarcated by the government. It also provided that Punjabi would be the medium of instruction in the Punjabi-speaking areas up to the High School stage, with Hindi as a compulsory subject from the fouth grade. The reverse arrangements were to apply in the Hindi-speaking areas." (18) Formula proved to be a significant step towards a long stair-case for the achievement of Punjabi-speaking State which was to comprise the areas with more percentage of the Sikh population and where Punjabi language was to be predominantly spoken. It was obviously a great achievement of the Akali Dal.



S. Tara Singh Thaither. (5-11-1888 22-10-1967) Because of the harassment at the hands of the British Government in India, he went to China in 1912, and joined the Indian Revolutionaries. In 1915, he was brought back to India in the Lahore Conspiracy Kama Gata Maru Case. He remained in Jail for about 10 years in various cases including Lahore Conspiracy case. He was the 'Dictator' of the Gurdwara Shahid Ganj's (Lahore) Agitation. He was one of the Presidents of Akali Dal.

RELEASE OF MASTER TARA SINGH FROM SITA PUR JAIL AND REACTION OF AKALI DAL TOWARDS SACHAR FORMULA

" Modern Sikh History is centred round the Akali Party "
(Lord Birdwood).

On 19-2-1949, Master Ji was taken from Narela (near Delhi) to Meerut Jail, from where he wrote a letter to Pt. Nehru that if the Sikh Scheduled Castes were not given the same rights and privileges as enjoyed by the Hindu Scheduled Castes, he would resort to fast. From Meerut,

Master was taken to Banaras and then to Almora Jail and last of all to Sita Pur Jail, from where he was released on October 4. 1949, at 4.00 P. M. Master's demands were : the creation of Punjabi-speaking State ; and the special representation and the safeguards for the Sikhs.

On 20-10-1949, the Working Committee of the Akali Dal welcomed Sachar Formula and appreciated the demarcation of Punjabi-speaking area where Punjabi in *Gurmukhi* script would be the medium of instruction, however, it opposed the clause giving option to the guardians for selecting the language for their children in the basic primary stage. According to the Dal, the above option should be given only to the people of non-Punjab descent. On 23/10, the Sikh Educational Conference at Patiala opposed the option given to the parents to choose the language and script. On 28/5/1950, S. Hukam Singh, M. P. was elected as the Akali Dal's Chief when Master Ji resigned voluntarily. The Working Committee of the Akali Dal passed the resolution the same day that a full autonomous Punjabi-speaking State on the basis of language and culture be established and the same rights for the Sikh minority in Punjab be conferred as were given to Anglo-Indian and Backward Classes. Enquiry was demanded into the military operation against the Nihang Singhs in Gurdwara Chelian Sahib where 11 Nihangs were killed.

SACHAR RESIGNS AND BHARGAVA BECOMES THE CM FOR THE 2ND TIME.

When Sachar became the Chief Minister, he "knew that he was on probation. For a gambit he launched an anti-corruption drive, which nearly boomeranged on him, for among the bogus permit-holders of steel quotas all the culprits were not supporters of Dr. Bhargava, his predecessor in office, whom he wished to bring into disrepute. Some of them were believed to be his own. Discrimination was allegedly practised in the investigation of the cases. The drive hastened the end of his ministry as it had spurred Dr. Bhargava to greater efforts to win back Giani Kartar Singh. Sachar later attributed his exit to the machinations of the high-ups. He complained in a Press statement that "strings had been pulled from afar" to bring about the downfall of his ministry. Bhargava of course was a protege of Sardar Patel and Sachar of Maulana Azad. Such was the central equation between the two provincial factions." 19

On October 18, 1949, Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava and Shri Prithvi Singh Azad were sworn in as the Chief Minister and the Cabinet Minister



On 29/10/49, the new ministers were sworn in the Bhargava ministry. L to R: S. Narotam Singh, Capt. Ranjit Singh, S. Gurbachan Singh Bajwa, Shri P. S. Azad, S. Kapur Singh and Dr. Bhargava.

respectively. Sachar stated that the Congress Parliamentary Board refused to give him a free hand and Dr. and his 'clique' encouraged officers to create a discord. He spoke at length to expose the arch conspirators whose only job in the ministry was to sabotage it.

On 29-10-1949, new ministers namely : Dr. Lehna Singh, S. Gurbachan Singh Bajwa and S. Narotam Singh were sworn in. In order to reconcile the claim of S. Kapur Singh and S. Kairon, the number was kept at 5, otherwise 7 ministers were to be taken. On 14-3-1950, Capt. Ranjit Singh was sworn in as the 6th minister in the Bhargava's Cabinet. Because of the part of Giani Kartar Singh in toppling the first Bhargava's Ministry, S. Patel had imposed a ban that Giani was not to be taken in the ministry for 6 months. Giani was, therefore, taken as the minister only on 5-5-1950, and he replaced S. Narotam Singh. S. Kapur Singh Speaker did not accept the offer of ministership. It was only on 4-10, that Narotam Singh Advocate, a highly enlightened and refined person, was taken as the 7th minister.

DR. GOPI CHAND BHARGAVA

(1889-1966)

(Bhargava belied Louis McHenry Howe, who said in his address on

Jan. 17, 1933, "You cannot adopt politics as a profession and remain honest.") (Author)

Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava was born in 1889 at Sirsa in Haryana in a *Brahmin* family. He qualified M.B.B.S. in 1912 from K.E.M. College, Lahore. Under the influence of Lala Lajpat Rai, he took keen interest in the Freedom Movement and was arrested in 1923 and 1926. Dr. Bhargava was chosen as the member of the old Legislative Conncil in 1927 but he resigned in 1929 as a protest against the repressive policies of the Government. He made a mark as the leader of the Opposition from 1937 to 1940. He was returned to the State Assembly in 1946. He took over the reigns of the administration of the Punjab with Swaran Singh as a member of the Partition Committee nominated by the High Command on 15-8-47. He was the favourite of Sardar Patel and S. Baldev Singh. On 6-1-1954, the Degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred on him by the Punjab University.

During his long career of public service full of sacrifices, he has been that of a man of personal integrity with complete freedom from communal bias. He was very simple, unassuming and a man of the people. Late Mrs. Sucheta Kriplani said about him: "We can say, here is a life well-lived."

AKALI DAL'S QUIT CONGRESS RESOLUTION

(Panthic Members' Recall Resolution)

On 2-11-1949, Master Tara Singh stated that he wanted Punjabi Suba and the same autonomy as was given to Jammu & Kashmir. He talked of discrimination against the Sikhs in services and administration. The Akali Dal passed the resolution boycotting the Republic Day celebrations. That decision was strongly criticised by Kairon and Nagoke. The Dal issued a directive calling upon all the 22 M.L.As who were elected on the Panthic ticket and had joined the Congress in March, 1948, to resign from the Congress Assembly Party. On July 23, almost all the Sikh M.L.As assembled at Ambala, where Baldev Singh, Bhupinder Singh Mann and Gurmukh Singh Musafir were the special invitees, to ponder over the implications of the above directive. A sub-committee consisting of Baldev Singh, Kartar Singh (Giani), Ishar Singh Majhail, Ujjal Singh and Swaran Singh was constituted to meet the Akali Dal's Working Committee by July 30, so that the differences could be amicably resolved but it proved to be abortive as on 30/7/1950, the Akali Dal revoked the merger by 10 votes to 3 and resolved : "Whereas the

Shiromani Akali Dal had allowed the Panthic M.L.As. to join the Congress Assembly Party in the Centre and the Province as a gesture of goodwill and in full faith and belief that the Congress, with men of eminence like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajindra Prasad and Sardar Patel at the top, would respond, particularly at the time when the Sikh Community in its displaced, ruined and uprooted State needed all constructive sympathy and support and new status in the set up of the country, and whereas the Shiromani Akali Dal had been patiently waiting all this while, hoping and still hoping that the Congress would appreciate the sentiments and ambitions of the Sikh Community, especially when they are in consonance with nationalistic and secular principles, and whereas all these hopes have been sadly belied and battered by continuous oppression and suppression of the Sikhs in all walks of life, therefore, the Shiromani Akali Dal, after deep and considered deliberation, directs all M.L.As. who succeeded on the Panthic ticket to resign forthwith from the Congress and create a separate Panthic bloc in the Assembly."

Because of the above resolution, the position of S. Baldev Singh and Giani Kartar Singh, whose politics was more akin to Akali Dal, became shaky in the Congress while the group led by Nagoke got a new lease of life. On 11-8, Master stated at Ludhiana that Giani Kartar Singh's role was the betrayal of the Panth. On 14-8, Giani retorted that 'the Quit Congress Resolution would be 'the moral breach of trust'. In deference to the above Dal's resolution, Jaswant Singh Duggal and Mann Singh Hambo, the Panthic M.L.As. resigned from the Congress Assembly Party on 24-8 and 25-11, respectively. S. Baldev Singh stated at Chamkaur Sahib on 24-12-50, that the Panthic M.L.As. joined the Congress at the behest of the Akali Dal and the passing of the above resolution virtually 'put the cart before the horse'. He wanted the appointment of a 5—Member Committee to examine the respective stands taken by him and Master and whosoever was found faulty, must withdraw from politics.



Among the Sikhs, Late Sant Jawala Singh of Harkhowal was much respected.

(See the last lines of page 22)

MASTER TARA SINGH'S 2ND ARREST AFTER INDEPENDENCE

On August 9, 1950, the ammunition shop owned by Master's son, Jaswant Singh, was raided and sealed off by the police. Jaswant Singh's father-in-law, Bakhsish Singh, was arrested under Section 3 of the Punjab Safety Act. On 7-9, Master was arrested under Section 124-A and 153-A Penal Code and Section 24(a) of East Punjab Public Safety Act for having delivered a speech one in July 1950, at Shahabad in District Karnal and the other in August, 1950, at Ludhiana. On 10/9, the Akali Dal's Working Committee resolved that 17-9-50, was to be observed as a protest day against Master's arrest. The Division Bench of the Punjab High Court vide its order dated 28-11-50, quashed the proceedings and directed that Master be set at liberty forthwith. After the release, he stated that there was the possibility of Akali Dal's joining hands with the Hindu Maha Sabha, which was not opposed to the creation of Punjabi-speaking State. He hoped that both the parties might jointly contest election against the Congress, which stood in the way of Punjabi Suba's realisation.

BHARGAVA RESIGNS AND PUNJAB PLACED UNDER PRESIDENT'S RULE

On March 30, 1951 the rival group led by Sachar and Kairon (the President of the Punjab State Congress Committee and Member of the Congress High Command) submitted a requisition to the leaders of the Congress to recall a meeting of the party for moving no confidence motion against the Dr. and his Ministry and on the same day, 5 Parliamentary Secretaries resigned. The Congress High Command accorded the permission on 31-3. It was decided that Sachar was to pilot the no confidence motion against Bhargava. The Members of the Congress Assembly Party met at Simla on 3/4, under the presidentship of K. G. Dutt, but the motion stood defeated by 4 votes : 35 votes were cast against the motion, while 31 members voted in its favour. Before the voting, the position was highly unpredictable. On 8-4, Sachar and Kairon handed over a memorandum to Bhargava urging the reshuffle of his ministry so that a composite cabinet could be formed. The supporters of Dr. Bhargava met at Ambala on 18-4, and expressed great concern against the ill—founded propaganda let loose by Kairon. On 27-4, an attempt was made for bringing a compromise between the rival groups. According to Sachar's group, Kartar Singh (Giani), Prithvi Singh Azad were to be dropped but the Doctor was not in favour of the whole-sale reshuffle of the cabinet. He never wanted to let down the M.L.As who

stood by him at the time of the moving of the no confidence motion. The Congress Parliamentary Board wanted Bhargava to apply his mind to Raja Ji's formula, according to which the formation of the cabinet was to be based on the proportional representation with a single transferable vote but that procedure, according to Bhargava, tantamounted to no confidence against him.

On May 3, 1951, about 1000 workers were invited by the Punjab State Congress at Ambala to consider the political situation with special reference to cabinet crisis. The meeting, presided by Kairon, broke up in confusion when the President declared the resolution passed requesting the High Command to remove or reshuffle Bhargava's cabinet to the satisfaction of the State Congress Party. The Congress High Command sent a directive containing a formula for the election of a panel of 10 members out of which the Parliamentary Board was to select ministers for the Punjab Cabinet with Bhargava as the leader, who was to be consulted by the Board in the matter of selection. On 18-5, a panel consisting of 10 members was elected. It consisted of 6 ministers of Bhargava's ministry while Sri Ram Sharma, Parkash Kaur, Sher Singh and Sunder Singh belonged to the group led by Sachar and Kairon, but nothing useful came out of the panel's formation. The High Command wanted Bhargava as the C.M. with Krishan Gopal Dutt, Swaran Singh, Narotam Singh, Sher Singh, Parkash Kaur and any other Harijan minister of Dr's choice as the other members of the ministry, while Giani Kartar Singh, Majhail, Pancham Chander and Ranjit Singh were to be eliminated.

The new development took place on 31/5/51, when the ministerialists were completely routed at Jullundur in the elections for the constitution of the Congress Election Board. The ouster of Dr.'s group in the above elections strengthened the position of Kairon. The High Command opined that without Kairon's co-operation, Dr. would not have a smooth sailing, but on the other hand, Dr. was determined not to yield. Consequently, on 11/6, the Congress Parliamentary Bd. issued a directive asking Bhargava to resign. There was a great rumour that Baldev Singh was leaving the Congress because of the attitude of the Congress High Command towards his friend, Bhargava, but on 12/6, he stated in the interview at his native village, Dumana, that he was not to leave the Congress and that if he was to do so, there was no reason for his having parted company with Master. Since Bhargava was showing reluctance to resign, Pt. Nehru threatened to resign as a protest against Dr.'s unwillingness to abide by the Parliamentary Board's latest directive to the Dr. to reshuffle his cabinet in order to give the State a stable ministry.

On 14/6, the Congress High Command asked the Dr. to resign at once and on 16/6, Bhargava resigned. When invited by the Governor on 17/6, Sachar and Kairon refused to form the ministry. On 20/6, the Constitution was suspended in Punjab and a proclamation to that effect was issued by the President of India. The Indian Parliament granted approval on 9/8 for the President's rule in Pb.

GIANI KARTAR SINGH RESIGNS FROM THE CONGRESS AND JOINS AKALI DAL

With the President's rule in Punjab and with the election of Pt. Nehru as the Congress President, Bhargava's group became weak and the forces led by his rival group became stronger. Giani Kartar Singh rightly concluded that his future lay in the Akali Dal. The Sikh *Maha Samagam* opened at Patiala on 1-9-51. Giani's trusted persons, Giani Dhanwant Singh, and S. Amar Singh Dosanjh, met Master at the *Samagam* and requested that Giani be excused for having sponsored a parallel Akali Dal ('Japani Akali Dal') and that he be allowed to join the parent Organisation. After getting the green signal from Master, Giani did not file the application for the Congress ticket. In the statement issued on 13/10, he assigned 5 reasons for not doing so : 1. The Sikh Scheduled Castes had not been given the same rights and privileges as given to the Hindu Scheduled Castes; 2. Adequate reservation for the Sikhs in the services and educational institutions had not been made nor the agricultural classes had been given the same rights which they enjoyed under the relevant provisions of law ; 3. The allottees of the evacuee land had not been given the proprietory rights ; 4. Permanent arrangements had not been made with Pakistan for an access to the Sikh Gurdwaras for their upkeep and repairs nor any help had been given to the Sikh educational and cultural institutions to make up the great financial loss, they suffered because of the loss of the income, accruing from the properties attached to the Sikh Gurdwaras left in Pakistan and 5. The communal propaganda against the *Gurmukhi* script had not been suppressed and proper steps were not being taken to promote the Punjabi Language.

On 4/11, there was a thrilling and exciting contest between Master and Nagoke for the presidentship of the S G P C. Although Master was defeated by a margin of 5 votes, yet Giani was able to win the confidence of Master because of his excellent performance in mustering the support for the Akali leader. On 4/11, Giani resigned from the Congress to be appointed as the General Secretary of the Dal.

*Including Pb. Land Alienation Act.

1952-PUNJAB ELECTIONS, SACHAR BECOMES THE CHIEF MINISTER

For the elections in the Punjab (it ceased to be East Punjab with the new Constitution coming into force on 26-1-50) the Congress and Akali parties were the main contenders for power. Pt. Nehru and Mrs. Vijay Laxmi Pandit toured Punjab in the month of December, 1951. They mainly spoke against the creation of a Punjabi-speaking State, while the Akali leadership tried its best to convince the electorate that their salvation lay in its creation. In the first week of February, 1952, the election results were out and the party position in the 126—member House was: Congress 98; Akali 13; Independents 6; Communists 6; Zamidara League 2; and Forward Block 1.

Although Kairon was having majority in the newly formed Congress Assembly Party, yet on 5/3, Sachar was unanimously elected as the leader of the Congress Assembly Party in the name of unity and at the instance of Maulana Azad. On 17-4-1952, 8—man cabinet for Punjab was sworn in. It consisted of Sachar as the C. M. with Kairon, Swaran Singh, Jagat Narain, Lehri Singh, Ujjal Singh, Sri Ram Sharma and Sunder Singh as the other Ministers. "For all their latent rivalry Sachar and Kairon were united in their opposition to the inclusion of Swaran Singh in the new cabinet. An adherent of the Nagoke group, Swaran Singh had taunted Sachar in the East Punjab Assembly for the miserable exit of his ministry in the autumn of 1949. And Sachar was liable to be easily hurt and unforgivable. Kairon did not like Swaran Singh for both personal and political reasons. The two, however, relented under central pressure to accommodate him. In a seven-man council of ministers, Swaran Singh was relegated to the seventh position in the warrant of precedence.

His demotion proved to be a providential as it marked him for instant promotion. Nehru was unhappy wilh Baldev Singh who he thought and had, perhaps, reason to believe was inextricably mixed up with the Akalis of Master Tara Singh's persuation. And he could think of no taller Sikh to replace his wealthy Defence Minister than Swaran Singh. The ground for his transfer from the State to the Centre had been prepared by Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke, who wanted not merely to have his own nominee in the central government but to administer a slap in the faces of Sachar and Kairon."20 The Ministry was reconstituted on 22/7/53, when Sri Ram Sharma, was removed from the Cabinet because of his association with the group of Satyapal and Sehgal.

WITH THE ELECTION OF PRITAM SINGH KHURANJ, THE SGPC COMES UNDER THE CONTROL OF SHIROMANI AKALI DAL.



Master Nahar Singh of Nagoke's group who was defeated by Pritam Singh Khuranj by a margin of 7 votes. Khuranj belonged to Master's group.

"The Akali Dal held a post-mortem on its debacle* which occurred despite of the attractiveness of its slogan. It was attributed largely to the fact that the SGPC was in adverse hands. Jathedar Udham Singh, a pro-Congress Akali, had been in control of the administration of gurdwaras since before the partition. The question of wresting the SGPC presidentship from him, therefore, acquired new urgencies. His replacement by a nominee of the Akali Dal was considered essential to the success of any drive for staging a recovery. In the annual election of office-bearers of the SGPC, the invincible Jathedar was dislodged. He was replaced in the office of president by Pritam Singh Khuranj. The Akali Dal was now in a better heart to carry on its fight."(21) On 5/10/1952, Khuranj had defeated Master Nahar Singh by 7 votes. Six commnnist members and 12 Pepsu members voted for Khuranj. With his election, the SGPC, which had been under the control of the Nagoke group for the last 4 years, came in the grip of the Akali Dal.

MASTER TARA SINGH'S 3RD ARREST SINCE INDEPENDENCE

On 18/1/53, Master stated at the 58th Session of the Indian National Congress at Nanal Nagar that the Sikhs did not depend on anybody's patronage as they relied on the strength of the Sikh *Panth*. The Sikhs, according to him, were prepared so make any amount of sacrifice for the achievement of Punjabi-speaking State. The Congress, he said, did not fulfil its promises. On 21/2, Rarewala was unseated by the Election Tribunal. It was very much in the air that the President's rule in Pepsu would be imposed even though the United Front Party had a clear majority in the Pepsu Assembly. Dr. Katju stated in Hoshiarpur that there could be no linguistic division of Punjab. On 23/2, Amritsar Dis-

*Only 13 members on the Akali ticket were returned in the 126—member House.

trict Akali Jatha decided to hold a meeting in the Akalianwala Bagh, Amritsar, to commemorate Nankana Sahib Martyrs' day and to criticise the Government's policies towards Pepsu and particularly its refusal to create Punjab-speaking State by defying the ban imposed under section 144 Cr. P. C. More than 48 persons were arrested. On 24/2/53, Master was arrested along with 10 Akalis. The arrests also took place in Ludhiana,



With the election of Pritam Singh Khuranj, the SGPC came under the control of the Akali Dal. Master Tara Singh is seen sitting between Rarewala and Khuranj. In the picture, Master and Khuranj are seen garlanded after Akali Dal's victory in the SGPC elections.

Jullundur and various other places. When Master was produced before the District Magistrate on 26/2, he refused to reply to the questions put by the Court on the ground that he had boycotted the 'illegal proceedings.' On 27/2, the Working Committee of the Akali Dal met under the presidentship of Hukam Singh and the *Satyagraha* was called off till March 8, when the situation was to be reviewed. Time was given to the government "to undo the wrong and ease the situation" by the above date. Master was released on bail for 3 days for paticipating in the Budget Session of the SGPC to be held on 8-3-53. He again went to the jail after the expiry of 3 days. On 11-3, the Working Committee was dissolved and absolute powers were given to the Akali Dal's President. On 9-3, all the Distt. Presidents and the General Secretaries from Punjab and Pepsu assembled at Amritsar to review the situation arising out of Master's arrest. After long deliberations, the Dal's President announced that the final decision would

be taken after consulting the members of the Working Committee. In the mean-time, Mr. Chaman Lal acted as the mediator between the Pb. Govt. and the Dal. His efforts succeeded when the Chief Minister issued a statement and sent a telegram to the Akali Dal to the effect : "Punjab Government has no intention of interfering with the religious observances of any sect." It led to the proposed agitation being called off and Master was released on 14-3-1953.

AKALI DAL GETS THE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SIKH SCHEDULED CASTES REMOVED

Akalis' confrontation against the Congress on the question of discrimination against the Sikh Scheduled Castes came to the climax at the Akali Convention, held at Anandpur Sahib on 30-9. The Convention gave the ultimatum to the Government of India for the fulfilment of 4 main demands : (1) extension of same privileges and concessions to the Sikh Scheduled Castes as were allowed to Harijans : (2) the creation of Punjabi-speaking State : (3) the holding of early elections in Pepsu : and (4) the appointment of a Commission to enquire into the case of injustice done to the Sikhs in the services.

It was decided that mass agitation be started at Delhi under the leadership of Master to get the President's Order on the Scheduled



Bhai Vir Singh

(5-12-1872—10-6-1957)

He was a great poet, a scholar and a spiritual leader. He edited and published for the first time Prachin Panth Prakash, the work of Rattan Singh Bhangu. "He was essentially a product of the best aspects of Sikhism." He was conferred the degree of Doctor of Oriental Learning Honoris Causa, in 1949 in absentia by the Punjab University. Padame Bhushan was awarded to him in 1956.*

*Commented by KA NAA Subramanyam.

Castes amended. In that connection, Master was to leave Anandpur Sahib for Amritsar with a group of 25 persons. They were to undertake the tour of Punjab and Pepsu en-route to Delhi either on foot, by rail or road. On the eve of Master Ji's departure from Anandpur Sahib along with the *Jatha* of 28 persons, Master stated : "In order to expose the treachery of the Congress Government describing itself as a secular but in reality aimed at suppressing our religion, I appear before the Darbar of Guru Gobind Singh (Takht Kesgarh Sahib) and I take solemn pledge that I will sacrifice my life by following the foot-steps of Guru Teg Bahadur...Such an open discrimination against a religion was practised in this country by the King Aurangzeb. Offences could be pardoned on one's conversion to Islam. Today, this Government has maintained certain concessions (which are) allowed to the people on their becoming Hindus and those are snatched on one's becoming a Sikh. If we cannot remove this discrimination by our sacrifices, we should be considered as finished. I cannot tolerate such a *Zoolam* on Sikh religion and Sikh *Panth* even for a moment. I prefer death to life of such a disgrace. One reason for laying special emphasis on this demand and bringing it to the fore-front is that while I had notified my intention to go on hunger strike in jail, S. Bhag Singh, Giani Kartar Singh and Bawa Harkishan Singh, who had been sent by the Government, had assured me that the Government had accepted my demand. Sikhs of Scheduled Castes all over the country would get the same rights as the Hindus. But now the secular Government is backing out on several pretexts."22

S Prem Singh Prem, General Secretary Pepsu Congress Committee, labelled the aforesaid morcha as an election stunt, while Ch. Sunder Singh, Minister in the Punjab Cabinet, threatened that he would fast unto death if the Akalis' demands were conceded. On 25-10, Home Minister Dr. K. N. Katju, said at Jullundur that Akali Dal's demand for the inclusion of Sikh Backward Classes in the President's Order could only be accepted if at all it was to be accepted, not before 1957. Prof. Yashwant Rai took out a *Jatha* from Rupar to counteract the propaganda of Master. On 4-11, Master sought the co-operation of the Hindus to "kill" Congress. When Pt. Nehru visited Jullundur on 9-11, he called Akalis' demand a big hoax, however, the Home Minister categorically said in his reply to Musafir's letter that there would be no discrimination between Hindu and Sikh backward classes.

Giani Kartar Singh, the General Secretary of Akali Dal, reached Delhi on 13-11, and wanted the *morcha* to be suspended in view of the

Katju-Musafir correspondence. On 16-11, Master along with Rarewala, Giani Kartar Singh and Lal Singh, M. P. met Dr. Katju. In a letter written by Master to Katju, the former had sought some clarifications as to whether all 'facilities and concessions' included political and constitutional privileges or not, and he also wanted a categorical assurance from the Home Minister that the Sikh Scheduled Castes besides being given social and economic rights would also be allowed to contest the elections from the various legislatures and local bodies out of the reserved constituencies. Master, Rarewala, Kartar Singh (Giani), Bhupinder Singh Mann, Bahadur Singh, M. P., Lal Singh, M. P. and others met at the residence of Hukam Singh on 18-11, and examined the details of Katju's reply and they being found statisfactory, the announcement abandoning the agitation was made the same day.

SAMPURAN SINGH RAMAN'S FAST FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF PUNJABI-SPEAKING STATE

Sampuran Singh Raman was a honest and sincere person with progressive views. He did not see eye to eye with Pritam Singh Gojran, a follower of Master Tara Singh. One 21-6-53, the Pepsu Riyasti Akali Dal (Raman Group) held its convention under the presidentship of Dara Singh, the then Education Minister in Pepsu. It was resolved that the Punjabi-speaking State be created at the earliest and Master should retire from politics. Master's 'dictatorial' leadership and association with the feudal elements came up for sharp criticsm. The death of Rumulu by fast for achieving Andhra Pradesh on the linguistic basis left an indelible impact on the Sikhs and particularly on Raman, the then President of the Pepsu Akali Dal. On 7-10, he declared his intention to undertake fast unto-death on the issue of Punjabi Suba. He was to start his march from Damdama Sahib Gurdwara to Delhi on 28-10-53. He stated that the Govt. must concede the principle of the re-organisation of Punjab on linguistic and cultural basis. He charged Master for soft-pedaling the demand of Punjabi Suba because of his being "pro-Raj Pramukh and pro-Rarewala". In a statement to the press, he declared: "The Sikhs have all along sided with the Congress and have made overwhelming sacrifices for their motherland, but when the question of granting protection to the cultural traditions and language comes, the Congress not only refuses to honour its past pledges, but maligns the Sikh leaders as reactionaries and disruptive. The only way of getting justice from such a corrupt and hypocritcial administration is to rouse the conscience of the people by making a personal sacrifice." Raman along with 4 companions was arrested on 21-11, for defying the order banning his entry into Delhi,

where he was to keep the fast unto death before the Prime Minister's residence. He kept the fast in the Disstt. Jail but was not allowed to die because of the forced-feeding by the jail authorities, however, his health stood completely shattered. He was released from Delhi on 27-11, but he again courted arrest along with 9 persons on 30-11. He kept the fast in the jail but on 21-12, the same was broken on the asking of the Action Committee. On 11-9-54, the knot of disunity in the Akali Dal was untied when on the appeal of the Dal's President, his group decided to merge with the official body of the Dal in Pepsu.

THE STATES REORGANISATION COMMISSION

On December 22, 1953, the Govt. of India announced the appointment of States Reorganisation Commission with Syed Fazal Ali as the Chairman, H. N. Kunzru and K. M. Panikkar as the other members, to go into the question of redrawing state boundaries. "The climate in Punjab was charged with excitement following the appointment of the SRC. The Akali Dal submitted a memorandum urging the formation of a Punjabi-speaking state. It claimed all the districts of Jullundur division with the exception of Kangra, the entire PEPSU territory except the tehsils of Jind and Narwana and large portions of Ambala division, namely Ambala district, Karnal district minus Panipat tehsil and Sarsa, Fatehabad and Tohana area of Hissar district, and Ganganagar district of Rajasthan. The proposed state would have had an area of over 35,000 square miles and a population of about 12 million, of which the Sikhs formed 40 per cent ..The memorandum of the Maha Punjab Samiti (Greater Punjab Committee) on the other hand made out a Case for the inclusion in Punjab of not only PEPSU but also Himachal Pradesh. The Punjab government and the Punjab Congress were themselves in favour of Greater Punjab... (23) "Although at that time the most disputed issue was that of the Punjab, no Sikh was nominated to this Commission. The case for a Punjabi Suba was presented by the Akalis. Several Hindu bodies opposed the demand by asking for the amalgamation of Himachal Pradesh (which was overwhelmingly Hindu) and the Punjab into a *maha* (greater) Punjab. The commission made its report two years later, rejecting the case for a Punjabi-speaking state on the ground that a "minimum measure of agreement necessary for making a change" in the existing set-up did nor exist...Master Tara Singh denounced the report as a "decree of Sikh annihilation". He said with some justification that if there had been no Sikhs, Punjabi would have been given a state of its own like the other major languages recognised by the Indian constitution ; the refusal to concede a Punjabi state was,

therefore, tantamount to discrimination against the Siks. He threatened to start a passive resistance movement. Hindus led by the Arya Samajist-JanSingh group launched a counter-campaign to 'save Hindi'. Communal tension led to rioting between Hindus and Sikhs in many towns" (24).

AKALI DAL'S GLORIOUS VICTORY IN THE SGPC ELECTIONS

On January 18, 1954, the no confidence motion against the President of the SGPC was passed and Isher Singh Majhail was elected as the President in place of Pritam Singh Khuranj. Master's group abstained and its efforts to obtain an injunction from the Sikh Gurdwaras Judicial Commission to restrain the rival group from holding the meeting and moving the vote of no confidence failed. The Majhail group held its meeting in front of the Teja Singh Samundri Hall because Khuranj did not allow it to hold the meeting in the Hall as he found the meeting illegal. It proved to be a difficult problem for Majhail's group to take over the charge as the Akalis put up a strong resistance resulting in the wounding of 6 persons. However, Majhail succeeded in getting the control of the SGPC on 21-1-54. On 28/1, Majhail ordered the Gurdwara employees not to allow any political meeting to be held in the gurdwaras. On 20/5, Baldev Singh, Musafiir, Nagoke, Ranjit Singh (S. Bahadur), Teja Singh Akarpuri, A. S. Sehgal, Ajit Singh Nihal Singh (Maharaj), Joginder Singh Mann and Raghbir Singh Panj Hazari submitted a memorandum to the Sikh Ministers in the Pb. Govt. that a Bd. of trustees be constituted to manage the Sikh Gurdwaras as the elections based on the adult franchise created divisions in the Sikh Community. On 17/10, Majhail's group maintained its control on the SGPC as the meeting, held on the above date, far from being a trial of strength, as expected originally, proved to be a tame affair as the proceedings were completed within half an hour. The Dal was able to regain its control from Majhail's group in the elections held in the last week of November, 1954. The Dal contested the elections on the issue of Punjabi Suba and reached an alliance with the communists as they were also supporting the above demand. "The Congress utilised all official machinery for the purpose of elections, but the masses gave an unequivocal verdict. Never in the history of elections, has a party in power been so utterly routed as was the fate of the Congress baptised Khalsa Dal. The Khalsa Dal contested 132 seats and won only 3. The Shiromani Akali Dal contested 112 seats and won all. This success raised the morale of the Sikhs, proving that, at least there was unanimity in the Sikhs supporting the Punjabi Suba." (25) "The Congress-sponsored Khalsa Dal had contested 132

out of 134 elective seats and lost all of them except three. The victors were the Akali Dal and the Desh Bhagat Board of communists. The Akalis and the communists had joined hands as both stood for a Punjabi Suba. Their alliance brought no fewer than 22 Desh Bhagat into the reconstituted SGPC." (26).

64—DAY AKALI MORCHA AGAINST THE BAN ON THE 'PUNJABI SUBA ZINDABAD' SLOGAN AND MASTER'S 4TH ARREST IN FREE INDIA

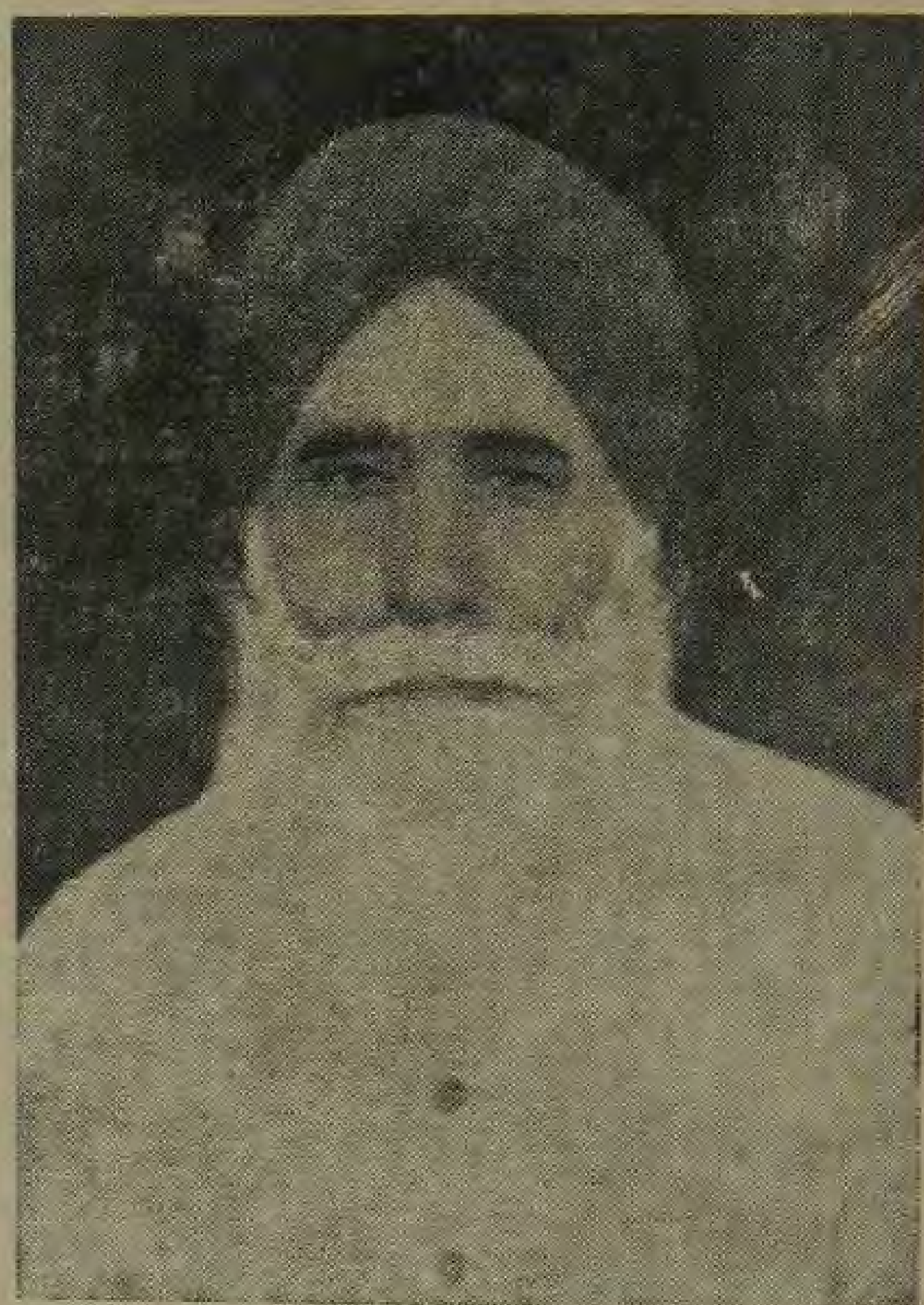
("Allegiance to the State is constantly withdrawn by some group which takes the view that the state is biased against its interests".*)

Against the Government's interference in the Sikh Gurdwaras, Master got the meeting between him and Sachhar arranged on 21/1/55. During the talks, Master pin-pointed the instances of the interference, the Govt. was making in the Sikh Gurdwaras. It was asserted that the Sikhs wanted an honourable existence in India, but Sachhar played upon certain words of Master said out of context. He stated that Master wanted a Sikh State. The Sikh public opinion was being mobilized in favour of the Punjabi-speaking State. On 6/4/55, the District Magistrate, Amritsar, promulgated an order prohibiting under section 144 Cr. P.C. the shouting or display of slogans such as "(1) Punjab (or Maha Punjab) Suba Leke Rahenge (ii) Maha Punjab (or Punjabi Suba) Amar Rahe or Zindabad or Murdabad, (iii) Sene wich goli khanwange Punjabi Suba (or Maha Punjab) Banawange." The ban triggered off a disobedience movement and the Akali Dal took it a great encroachment upon its democratic right to raise the 'Punjabi Suba Zindabad' slogan. On 24/4, the Akali Dal passed a resolution that a peaceful *Satyagraha* would be launched to establish the right to raise the above slogan, unless the order was withdrawn by May 10, 1955.

Master Tara Singh along with 10 other companions courted arrest on 10/5/55, and the ban was defied. Before the arrest, Master stated *inter alia* : "The morcha is only to secure the right of peaceful agitation in the form of shouting slogans to secure a Punjabi-speaking State and other linguistic States...The Punjabi-speaking State will comprise those parts of the country where the majority of the people speak Punjabi I state now, as I have done so many times before, that we Sikhs have never objected and shall never object to the slogan of 'Maha Punjab Zindabad'. Why then, has this slogan been banned ? Is it not clear that this ban against Maha Punjab is simply to create a justification to stop the slogan of 'Punjabi Suba Zindabad'?" The Akali Dal started

*(Laski in 'State in Theory and Practice' P. 105)

sending the *Jathas* who offered themselves for arrest by defying the ban. At the outset, less number of *Satyagrahis* were allowed to court arrest but finding the enthusiastic response the number was enchanced even to 100 a day somuch so that by first week of July, about 8000 volunteers including the top Akali leaders were arrested. The movement gained more and more momentum and the Government found it increasingly difficult to cope with the situation as it had also spread to the other cities of Punjab. The Haryanvi leaders, Siri Ram Sharma and Siri Chand got the resolution passed in the Regional Committee of the North Western Zone of All India Linguistic States' Conference :



Teja Singh Akarpuri, one of the Akali Dal's Presidents.

"That the Committee is of the considered view that the propagation of the demand of reorganisation of States on linguistic and cultural basis is the constitutional right of every citizen and organisation. The ban imposed by the Punjab Government on innocent slogans connected with the demand for a Punjabi-speaking State is absolutely unjustified and unconstitutional." The *Satygaraha* was supported by old Congress men like Kedar Nath Sehgal, Abdul Ghani Dhar and Mota Singh (Prof.) "The movement reached its peak in the first week of July, 1955, when a large number of volunteers poured into the premises of the Akal Takhat, not only from different parts of the Punjab, but from other provinces also. The organisers increased the number of Satyagrahis from 50 to 100. The authorities too became more stringent and repressive, and the Golden Temple was cordoned off by the police. The ingress of the people from outside Amritsar was stopped. It worsened the situation in as much as the news went round that the Government had banned even the pilgrimage to the Golden Temple. The Punjab Government cancelled the arms licenses of the SGPC and sought surrender of the arms meant for the protection of the historic jewellery in the Temple. When this order was not obeyed, the police entered the precints of the Golden Temple, closed the Guru Ka Langar by removing the utensils, etc., and also raided Guru Ram Das Sarai and arrested the Head Priests of the Akal Takhat and the Golden Temple. The police also raided the office of the Shiromani Akali Dal, and used tear gas on the crowd and the volunteers that had gathered in protest in the *Parkarma* of the Gol-

den Temple. This was the most infamous sacrilege ever committed in the recent past, and all at the behest of the Sachhar Ministry. The troops went on a flag march through the bazaars and the streets in the vicinity of the Golden Temple to create panic and overawe the people. This had ironically the opposite effect, and the number of volunteers courting arrest increased." (27) On 4/7, the police raided the offices of Akali newspapers and their press buildings were sealed. Finding no let-up in the agitation against the govt., the Chief Minister announced the lifting of the ban on the shouting of the slogans on 12/7/55, and stated : "Unfortunately while our leaders had been busy with the great problems of the world peace, we at home, particularly, in the Punjab find ourselves in a situation of increasing tension between the communities and the parties. I feel it behoves each one of us to utilize the occasion of the home-coming of the apostle of peace to do all we can bring about conditions of peace in the State " The Government said that the ban was lifted "to mark the great occasion of Mr. Nehru's triumphal return from peace mission abroad." Commenting about the above morcha, Master stated : "1 may be specially noted that the morcha was not for the attainment of 'Punjabi Suba but was for removal of ban against the innocent slogan of 'Punjabi Suba Zindabad'. This morcha was so perfectly non-violent that nobody even now can point out a single word uttered or deed committed by any Sikh anywhere which may be provocative or insulting to any gentleman, official, community or religion. The Pb. govt. was completely in the wrong for unlawfully banning this innocent, non-provocative and unobjectionable slogan, and, thus, attacking civil liberties of the people. The consequence was that no sane neutral gentleman supported the Government's position and Akalis succeeded in getting the ban withdrawn." (28)

For defying the ban on slogans, Master Ji was convicted by the Addl. Magistrate Amritsar on 8/9/55 under Ss. 188 and 177 IPC for leading the Akali batch on 10/5. He was sentenced to undergo 4 months imprisonment. At the trial, Master stated in reply to the court's question that he defied the order as it was illegal. On appeal, the Addl. Distt. & Sessions Judge, Amritsar, vide order dated 8/9/55, upheld the conviction, but reduced the sentence to the period already undergone. Master who was lodged in the Gurgaon Jail, reached Amritsar on 10/9, by Bombay-Express. After seeing the huge crowd, which reached the railway station to welcome and to take him into a procession, he quietly boarded a jeep and went to the Golden Temple for the prayers. On 21/5/55, Bawa Harkishan Singh was elected as the President of the SGPC because of

Master's resignation. After the release, Master was re-elected as the SGPC's president on 20/9/55.



On May 21, 1955, Bawa Harkishan Singh was elected as the President of the SGPC because of Master Ji's resignation. On the left side of Bawa is A. S. Machaki, Adv., while Hari Singh of Kala Khungar (Hoshiarpur), who filed a few writ petitions in the High Court in 1975, for the increase in the wheat procurement price, is 3rd from the extreme left in the picture. Gurbachan Singh Adv. Gurdaspuri, is standing 3rd in 2nd row if seen from the left side.

Dr. Joyce Pettigrew in her interesting book "Robber Noblemen" had given the background of the above agitation : "The persistent Sikh pressure for a Punjabi-speaking province was...supported by innumerable grievances, some, real, others imaginary......First, Sikhs objected that the government did not continue the British practice of enforcing the requirements of standard Sikhs religious discipline among the Sikh personnel in the defence forces. It was said that Sikh officers in the army were encouraged to cut their hair, and that some complied because they knew that otherwise they would certainly not be promo-



Principal Iqbal Singh. He remained the Acting President of Akali Dal, & 'dictator' of 1955—Akali Morcha.

ted. Second, it was only after a struggle undertaken by the Akali Dal that Sikh scheduled castes were legally provided in 1953, with the same privileges as were Hindu scheduled castes. But before this legal provision was made many scheduled castes are alleged to have left the fold of Sikhism. Third, another issue widely propagated by the Akali Dal was the eviction of Sikhs from the Terai. The terai area is a strip of territory, rising in the height from 500 to 3000 feet, which covers the foothills of the Himalayan ranges for a distance of eighty miles in the state Uttar Pradesh (UP). It has a humid climate and until recently was swampy, ridden with malaria and infested by wild animals, all adverse to human habitation and agriculture. Following partition 2000,000 Sikh refugees principally Jats, were invited to settle in the area by the UP government......It became an area colonized by Sikhs, and the UP government took rent for land and taxes and other government dues from the settlers over a period of ten years. In 1959, the UP Legislative Assembly passed a law the U.P Land Eviction and Recovery of Rent Damages Bill with the object of evicting a large proportion of Sikh population of the area. Sampurnanand, the then CM of Uttar Pradesh, claimed that many of the Sikhs had no right to be there ; in his speech he used many emotionally charged terms, such as infiltrators and trespassers. He said that since UP itself had a large landless population, these sikhs would have to be evicted. The sikhs had converted jungle into cultivable land now that land was capable of giving return they felt that their labour had been secured only to do the dangerous work of clearing the jungle, and that government had never intended giving them security of tenure in return. The Sikh Community as a whole became full of resentment over this issue, feeling that all were being exploited, and that to submit to such acts was not consonant with their dignity It gave emotional content and meaning to the Akali demand as a demand arising specifically as a protest against failure on the part of the central government to implement its professed policy of secularism. The Revenue Minister of UP had called the Sikhs who had come to settle in the State criminals... A fourth instance of what any Sikh branded as the communalism of the majority was that when a Hindu, Sachar, became CM of the Punjab in 1954, he had Arya Samaj rituals performed, whereas in a contemporary situation it was said that if a Sikh had an Akhand Path (continuous reading of the Granth Sahib) he would have been accused of being communal ; the feeling was that it was always the minority that had to prove itself non-communal, never the majority...All these feelings continued to a mass upsurge of feeling among Sikhs against the congress government as Hindu Raj while, on the latter's part, their discriminatory acts,

symbolized fear and distrust of the Sikhs......"With the above back-ground, "On 10 May, 1955, a morcha (mass demonstration) was launched by the Akali Dal to protest against the governments' ban on the raising of the slogan 'Punjabi Suba Zindabad' (victory for a Pnnjabı speaking province)."

SACHAR RESIGNS AND KAIRON BECOMES THE CHIEF MINISTER

On July 17, 1955, the S.G.P.C. with Gian Singh Rarewala as the Head, demanded judicial probe into the incident of 4/7/55, when the police had entered the Harmandir Sahib. The C.M. invited the representatives of the S.G.P.C. on 10/9/55, at Chandigarh to discuss the question of the sacrilege and the other grievances but it produced no results. Master issued the statement on 20/9, declaring that unless the Pb. Govt. made amends for the incident of July 4, the Sikhs would not rest. Sachar came to the Akal Takhat and apologised on behalf of the Government for the sacriligious acts committed on 4/7. "Far from standing on ceremony, Chief Minister Sachar pocketed his pride and went to the Golden Temple in sack cloth and ashes to tender an unconditional apology on behalf of his government for whatever acts of sacrilege his police might have committed inadvertently. The apology cost him his office. Pratap Singh Kairon, who commanded a majority in the Congress Party, sent a sufficiently large number of his supporters to meet the Prime Minister and tell him how Sachar had mishandled the agitation. The charge against the Chief Minister was that instead of taming the Akalis he had pampered them. Sachar offered his resignation to Nehru and it was aceepted. Kairon became Chief Minister in January, 1956... Though Sachar was a casualty of the Akali agitation and of his insistence on an apology Master Tara Singh had not bargained for his replacement by Kairon. For one thing, it tactically suited him to have a Hindu Chief Minister. Sachar had risen in his estimation by showing himself capable of owning a mistake. Secondly, he knew Kairon to be utterly ruthless. He and Kairon had worked together in the Akali Dal as its president and general secretary respectively in the early 1930s. They came to know and hate each other thoroughly."29. "During the agitation Kairon contrived to engineer Sachar's resignation. A contingent of police entered the Golden Temple, the Central Sikh shrine, whose precints were sacred, and fired on the assembling crowds. Many now say that the officer in charge acted on Kairon's instructions. Kairon advised Sachar to apologise to the Sikhs for this outrage, and he himself resigned from the Sachar cabinet. But by arrangements with his supporters, telegrams were sent

and deputations complained to Pandit Nehru to emphasize that Sachar's act of apology was that of a weak man who could not control the state. The Akali agitation culminated in what was known as the 'regional formula' whereby, for the transaction of government business with regard to certain specified matters, the state was to be divided into two regions, one Hindi-speaking and the other Punjabi-speaking, and for each region there was to be a regional committee consisting of members of the Assembly belonging to the region." 30

On 23/7, the Congress High Command approved of the action of Sachar in lifting the ban. It was made clear that no change would be made in the cabinet leadership, therefore, no motion of no-confidence be moved. However, the supporters of Kairon continued to hammer the point home to the High Command that Sachar did not rise to the occasion because of initially imposing the ban then its half-hearted enforcement and then its sudden and abrupt withdrawal, and, that, too, without consulting the cabinet or the Congress Committee. Sachar wanted the permission of the High Command to drop Kairon from the cabinet but it refused. Using the last weapon in the armoury and on the advice of Lala Jagat Narain, Sachar told the Congress Parliamentary Board that if he was forced to keep Kairon in the cabinet, he would prefer to resign. On 14/1 56, he actually resigned, and the immediate acceptance of the resignation by the Board showed how wrongly the situation was assessed both by Sachar and Lala. Baldev Singh and Swaran Singh were sounded but they refused to become the Punjab's C. M. Eventually, on 21/1, Kairon was unanimously elected as the leader of the Punjab Legislature Congress Party. On 23/1/56, 4-man Punjab Ministry consisting of Kairon as the C.M. and Mohan Lal, Sher Singh and Gurbachan Singh Bajwa as other Ministers, was sworn in. On 23/4, Gurbanta Singh and Mool Chand Jain were taken as Ministers, while Amar Singh, Balwant Singh Tayal and Ram Kishan were sworn in as the Deputy Ministers. After sometime, Darbara Singh was also taken as a full fledged Minister.

S. PARTAP SINGH KAIRON

(1901—1965)

"I've not only read Machiavelli, I've mastered him."*

(Kairon)

"Kairon was a great opportunist, through and through and most unscrupulous in means which he was he would adopt to achieve his objectives."** (Master Tara Singh)

*See 'Robber Noblemen'

**See 'Punjabi Suba' P. 287.

"In Kairon, Nehru found a handy stick with which to beat the Sikhs to bring them down ruthlessly."* (Ajit Singh Sarhadi.")

"Kairon rightly opposed the Punjabi Suba ; he wanted the Punjabi language to flourish even in the remote areas now the parts of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. The formation of the present 'Punjabi Subi' (The mini State of Punjab) shows that his apprehensions were well-founded.*** (Com. Ram Piara)

"None could skilfully analyse a man better than Kairon, he was to converse for hardly five minutes to put a man in his pocket." (Author)

Kairon was one of the most controversial figures in the Punjab politics. Some people spoke very high and some spoke very low of him. According to Khushwant Singh : "The Congress was fortunate in finding in Partap Singh Kairon, the Chief Minister of the Punjab, a man of dynamic energy who was at the same time passionately opposed to the Akalis." When the views of Kapur Singh (Sirdar) were solicited, he commented : "On the whole, he was not a properly educated person,



S. Kairon flanked by his political opponents Mr. Brish Bhan and Lala Jagat Narain.

*See Punjab i Suba. p. 426

***Comrade was the bitter political opponent of Kairon.

nor did he have any idea of self-respect of dignity of others. He had the peasant's shrewdness which instinctively knows where his own personal interests lie and in the pursuit of which, all considerations of ethics and propriety are deemed irrelevant."

A. S. Sarhadi comments : "The exit of Partap Singh Kairon from the political sphere of the State was a major event in Punjab politics, for he had ruled the State for 8 years, fighting all the while against the Sikhs and their objectives. He was the one man who had not given way or surrendered despite the tremendous sacrifices which the Sikhs had made for the attainment of Punjabi Suba. What reasons motivitated him is any body's guess, and would be the subject for a future historian to probe. Was it with the motive to seek the support of the Centre for personal power that he made the suppression of the Sikhs a means to that end, or did he genuinely feel that the partition of the Punjab would not ultimately be in the interest of the Sikhs ?...Chief Minister Kairon had left no means to demoralise the community and eliminate its self-respect. Never has a people made such sacrifices and under-gone so many sufferings as the Sikhs did, for a cause and an objective so simple and so true that it had become to be an ideology."

Dr. Joyce Pittigrew opined : "Nehru wanted a strong CM to control the Sikhs, and Kairon laboured under the pressure of proving that he was indispensable in this respect...An alliance between Master Tara Singh and S. Kairon would have been to the benefit of the Sikhs.'* While referring to Master and Kairon, Sarup Singh, the founder—President of the AISSF stated : "Kairon was too clever for Master Tara Singh, while Master was too simple for Kairon." When the views of Brish Bhan were invited, he said, "There was a constant fighting between his head and heart." When I met Tirlochan Singh Riyasti at Bhatinda in connection with Mahant Sewa Dass's fast, he casually referred to Kairon : "He could rule the whole of Punjab but not his family. He knew Sikh history well but unfortunately forgot that the Sikh Gurus always preferred merits to relationship." Kairon found in Baldev Singh the biggest rival, therefore, his chief strategy was to create a wedge between Nehru and Baldev Singh. Kairon brought point home to Nehru that whatever Master did, was done at the instance of Baldev Singh, who financed and advised the Akali Dal.

*From her Book 'Robber Noblemen' and the correspondence, she had with the Author of the present book.

His method of working is popularly known in the Punjab as the 'American Technique'. It was "manipulating and setting one leader against the other...He undermines everybody in that manner. He is particular to see that a person does not go beyond certain limits. Everyone should be kept within limits, that has been his policy. He is a shrewd politician. He has those inclinations of a fascist or dictator." "His major technique is to solve personal problems—personal economic problems—immediately. He will give you a job, a permit, a job to your wife, a membership in some board, some contract. He must deal with it immediately and he is a great leader who makes decisions. He believes in no body, he makes decisions himself. A former colleague of Kairon, but later a vigorous opponent said, "this is his biggest technique to corrupt politically. Everyone can be purchased, this is his thesis" (31)

About 14 days prior to his murder, I along with my brother-in-law met Kairon who wanted a receipt from my relative in connection with an income tax case of his son. I found him extremely friendly, informal, secretive and gifted with a penetrating vision. Referring to Kairon's dash, drive and decision, one of his cabinet ministers stated that Karion was the real *Mukh Mantry* (Chief Minister) while others were only *Santries* (Watch-men). The Congress leaders created a fratricidal fight among the Sikhs by making Master and Kairon fight each other to the



Kairon and others with the Pb. Governor, Shri Trivedi in 1952. L to R : Capt. Ranjit Singh, S. Ishar Singh Majhail, S. Kapur Singh, Shri P. S. Azad, S. Kairon, Shri Kidar Nath Sehgal, Shri C. M. Trivedi, Master Kabal Singh, S. Udham Singh Nagoke, S. (Justice) Harnam Singh & S. Narotam Singh Adv.

finish and when this reality dawned upon Kairon, he had already burnt his boats. During the interview, Kirpal Singh Chaksherewala, a highly respected Sikh leader told that he did warn Kairon, "You are being exploited to politically kill Master but in no case, you can ill-afford to forget that Master's eclipse would lead to your disgraceful downfall."

Kairon was born in Kairon in Distt. Amritsar, in 1901, into a Jat Sikh family After studying at the Khalsa College, Amritsar, he went to U. S. A. for higher studies. He received M. A. in Economics and Political Science at the University of Machigan. He returned to India in 1929 and joined Akali Dal under the influence of Master Tara Singh. In 1934, he became the General Secretary of the Dal. When the Akalis joined the Congress in 1937, Kairon became the active member of the Congress party so much so that he was appointed the General Secretary of the Congress Party in 1941. He remained the member of the Working Committee of the AICC and a cabinet minister in the State Ministry for a considerable period of time. His range of supervision became very wide because of his unexpected and sudden visits and that, too incognito, into govt. offices, police stations and the remote parts of the State. Undoubtedly, his grip on all the centres of power was complete.

On 6-2-65, Kairon along with his 3 companions was murdered near Rasoi in a typical Jat fashion. At the time of the murder, Kairon showed remarkable presence of mind. At the fateful time, Kairon addressed Sucha Singh : "*Puttar* Suchaya, *Kidhar* ?" (How do you happen to be here, my dear son ?) Sucha felt so much hypnotised that he retired and the shots were actually fired by Baldev Singh.* "Typical to the Punjab political scene was also the fact that the particular private enmity of his killer found collusion and support from those who were politically antagonistic to the C. M."**

REGIONAL FORMULA AND ITS BACKGROUND

On 9-10-55, the States Re-organisation Commission's report was released and the majority recommendation was for the amalgamation of both Pepsu and Himachal Pradesh with Punjab The demands for Punjabi Suba and Haryana Prant were rejected. On 10/10, the Akalis rejected the above report and decided to take out a peaceful and non-violent

*Out of the interview, the Author had with S. Piara Singh Mann, the Sr. Adv., of the Pb. & Hr. High Court, who met both Sucha Singh and Baldev Singh in the Ambala Central Jail prior to their being hanged.

**From 'Robber Noblemen'.

agitation for getting the report withdrawn. On 15/10, the Dal's Working Committee, in its closed door meeting, decided the line of action to be adopted in the All Sikh Parties' Panthic Convention to be held on 16/10, at Amritsar. The convention was attended by more than 1500 persons and among others, it was addressed by Master Ji, S. Rarewela, S. Hukam Singh, Giani Kartar Singh, Principal Jodh Singh and Ch. Kartar Singh. The convention resolved that the Sikhs would never submit to the SRC's report and the "Commission has utterly failed to do justice to the Sikhs, and has, rather delivered the Sikhs bound hand and foot to the slavery of an aggressively communal dominant group. The convention authorises the President to take suitable steps for conveying the views and sentiments of the Sikh community, to the Government of India and urging them to do their duty to the Sikhs."

In the light of the above resolution, Master Tara Singh along with Principal Jodh Singh, S. Rarewala, S. Hukam Singh, Giani Kartar Singh and Bawa Harkishan Singh met the Sub-Committee of the Central Cabinet and had a heart to heart talk with Pt. Nehru, Pt. G. B. Pant, and Maulana Azad. The Punjab Congress leadership was also not happy with the report. The 7-man deputation met the Punjab CM and demanded the speedy redress of the Sikhs' grievances. On 22-1-56, a 5-member delegation under the leadership of Master met the PM for 2½ hours. The details of the proposed new formula, according to which Punjabi was to be made the State language and the Hindi, the national language. were discussed.

The 61st Annual Session of All India Congress was held at Amritsar, on 7-2-56, to deliberate the vexed question of the reorganisation of States. The Dal held its 10th All India Akali Conference on 11/2. The occasion was also seized by the Maha Punjab Samiti to put up its show on the same day. The respective processions taken out by the Akalis and the Maha Punjab Samiti on 11/2, were peaceful and Kairon remained all the time in the control room. "The highlight of Congress sessions through the decades had been the traditional presidential procession which invariably during the freedom struggle and after attracted enormous crowds of spectators. The thunder of the Amritsar Congress session was stolen by the rival Akali procession which turned out to be more massive and more spectacular. Nehru had a weakness for crowds. The Akali turnout had made an impact on him." (32) Principal Teja Singh describsd the Akali procession with these words : "While standing by the road-side near the Shaheed Nagar, I saw a sight which has thrilled me to the core. It seemed as if the whole Sikh nation had turned out.



Picture relates to the 61st Congress Annual Session held on 7-2-56, at Amritsar. It deliberated the vexed question of the re-organisation of States.

All those who were able-bodied men and women had come from all the quarters of the Punjab, and even beyond, and were on the road. There are about 50 lakh Sikhs, all told. Excluding old persons, children and the disabled and the sick, there might be 20 lakhs in all. Out of these at least 5 lakhs had come to join the procession ... I am reminded of two accasions in history, when a similar concourse of people are said to have massed themselves together. I thought of Xerves, who led his cohorts Persians to invade Greece. He got erected a marble throne on the shores of the Bosphorous, from which he witnessed the march of his soldiers. They were so numerous that he could not count them. He built huge walled enclosures, each capable of holding 50,000 men. He ordered his men to fill the enclaves. In this way he was able to estimate the numbers. When all were marshalled before him, his eyes were filled with tears. The other such occasions, were when Alexander and Timur, at the head of huge armies marched into India to conquer the country." Another apt description of this historic procession was given by Brecher, the author of "Nehru, A political Biography" : "On a bright, cool, North Indian winter morning, the contending groups massed their

forces in a show of strength especially for the benefit of the Congres High Command which was camped close by, first came the Sikhs, in the most impressive and peaceful demonstration I have ever seen. Hour after hour, mile after mile, they marched, eight abreast, down the main streets of Amritsar, a hallowed name in the Indian Nationalism because of the shooting in 1919. Old and Young-men and women, they came on in endless streams, mostly with an expression of determination and sadness in their eyes,many still remembering the ghastly days of 1947, when their home-land was cut into two and hundreds and thousands of their co-religionists died or were maimed. What strength there was in the appearance of the old men, who with flowing beards, looked like the Hebrew prophets of old. Many carried their traditional swords, kiprans, and many wore blue turbans, a symbol of militancy (the dyers in the city did a handsome business this week). They had come from the villages and towns of the Punjab, and from far off places as well. Almost without exception, they marched in orderly file, portraying their unity of purpose. At intervals came the resouding cry 'Punjabi Suba Zinadabd' (Long live Punjabi Suba) and 'Master Tara Singh Zindabad' with intermittent musings to enliven the procession. On they came for five hours. None who watched them could doubt their genuine fear of being swallowed up in a vice-like embrace of rabid Hindusim. At conservative estimate, they numbered over one lakh. To this observer, it seemed more than double that figure."33.



The Akali procession taken out on 11-2-56, was historic. It seemed as if the whole Sikh nation had turned out to join it. It preceded the holding of 10th All India Akali Conference attended by about 50 lakh Sikhs.

After the All India Congress Session was over, Nehru invited

Master to Delhi for talks so that the differenceas between Congress and Akalis could be resolved. "After his return to Delhi, Nehru sent for Master Tara Singh and they had a heart-to-heart talk. It was decided to bury the hatchet between the Congress and the Akali Dal. An agreement was reached which came to be known as the Nehru-Master Pact. As the result of this pact, Himachal Pradesh was kept out of Punjab as suggested by Fazl Ali, chairman of the SRC, in his dissenting note. The exclusion of Himachal Pradesh by itself did not meet the Sikh aspirations. Hence what came to be known as the Regional Formula was devised to confer a limited measure of autonomy on the two linguistic regions of the reorganised state, the Punjabi region and the Hidi region ...Accordingly, the formula was written into the Punjab State Reorganisation Act. The State stood already demarcated into two regions by the operation of the Sachar Formula on the medium of instruction in Punjab and of the PEPSU Formula in PEPSU. The representatives of the two regions in the enlarged Punjab Assembly were to meet both jointly and separately as Regional Committees for Punjabi and Hindi areas. The Regional Committees were assigned 14 subjects on which they could initiate legislative proposals for the joint consideration .. The Nehru-Master Pact stipulated the merger of the Akali Dal in the Congress. Accordingly, the Dal amended its constitution to divorce itself from politics and to confine its activity to religious and cultural affairs of the Sikh Community. This paved the way for the formal entry into the Congress of all Akali leaders and the rank and file. While all his colleagues joined the Congress, Master Tara Singh stayed out. It was playing Hamlet without the Prince." (34).

Rarewala was of the opinion that in the changed circumstances, the Akali Dal should confine itself to only social, cultural, religious and educational activities of the Sikhs and should not enter the political field. Actually there was a race between S. Rarewala and Giani Kartar Singh to join the Congress as early as possible. Rarewala snatched the initiative from Giani and started talking to the Congress leaders so that he could secure an honourable position in the Congress. On 11/6/56, Master stated that there should be no ban on Akalis to join the Congress so that the Sikhs could retain the membership of both the organisations, however, he wanted the Congress men to leave the practice of purchasing Sikh leaders. Pepsu Akali M.L As accused Rarewala on 11/6, of betraying *Panth.* On 14/6, Rarewala replied that the Sikhs should not wage a futile war and the regional plan called for a new approach. Master took exception as to why Rarewala was meeting the Congress leaders without consulting him. On 15/7/56, the Akali Dal Working Committee

expelled Rarewala, S. Bhupinder Singh Mann, Kartar Singh Diwana, Sewa Singh of Barnala and Teja Singh, Advocate of Bhatinda, because of their 'revolt' against the Akali Dal. The move of the above persons to join the Congress was branded as 'treachery'. Hukam Singh who was elected Deputy Speaker to the Lok Sabha on 20/3/56 joined Giani Kartar Singh in condemning the role of Rarewala in by-passing the Akali Dal. All the Akali leaders felt sore as Rarewala's move reduced the Dal's bargaining capacity with Congress to a considerable extent. Rarewala estimated that if he waited more, he would not be able to occupy a better position in the Congress. He and his friends, therefore, joined the Congress at a big convention held at Patiala on 22/7/56.

1956—CONGRESS—AKALI MERGER

Master Ji presided over the Akali Dal Working Committee on 29/9, at Delhi. Master met Pt. Nehru and Maulana Azad on 30/9, for seeking certain clarifications and on that date, the Dal passed a resolution : "...it would not have any separate political programme of its own ; that the Dal would concentrate on the protection and promotion of religious, educational, cultural, social and economic interests of the Panth, and would guard against any violation and infringement of fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution that adversely hit the Sikhs ; and that the Dal would actively participate in the Formula, and in the implementation of various plans for the development of the country." About the above resolution and the events thereafter, S. Sarhadi in "Punjabi Suba" writes : "The resolution was passed unanimously in the meeting of 30th September, 1956. It was announced therein that an Akali conference would be held between the 4th and the 11th November when a present of two lakh members would be made to the Congress. At that time, the Akali Dal had a membership of 4,00,000. But this was not to be, as subsequent events would show. The meeting of the General Body of the Akali Dal was called for the 24th November, 1956, in which 322 delegates from the Punjab and outside were present. I had to speak again to support the resolution which had been earlier passed by the Working Committee on the 30th September. There was opposition this time by five members of the General Body, which included Gurbakhsh Singh, Advocate of Gurdaspur, Amar Singh Ambalvi, Advocate, Master Sujan Singh of Sarhali and Bedi Rachhpal Singh. The resolution was, however, passed with 5 dissidents voting against it. Master Tara Singh supported the resolution. ... Master Tara Singh had actively participated in the negotiations with the Congress High Command before the merger of the Akali Dal. He had met the Prime Minister before the adoption

of the merger resolution of the Working Committee of the Akali Dal and had felt satisfied when he returned to the Working Committee at Raqab Ganj Gurdwara, which was awaiting the results. I enquired of him at that time what had transpired during his talks, when I found him in a happy mood, but he would not divulge anything, remarking that he stood for co-operation with the Congress, and would disclose the gist of his talks at Amritsar in the meeting of the General Body. It was at Amritsar that Master Tara Singh divulged the substance of his talk with Pt. Nehru who had settled all issues by saying that Master Tara Singh's honour was his own thereafter ; and this satisfied Master Tara Singh to the extent that he declared in the meeting of the 30th September, 1956, that he would not forsake Nehru thereafter and stand by him. But hardly six months had passed before Master Tara Singh was again fighting Nehru again in every sphere. There was reason for it, Nehru let him down badly. After the merger resolution I felt that it would be difficult for the Akalis to exert a pull in the Congress unless we were able to adjust ourselves, and win the confidence of the Congress leadership particularly of Partap Singh Kairon. We had always found extreme antipathy and antagonism between Partap Singh Kairon and Master Tara Singh and their political careers had run apart, and they had been antagonistic to each other for the last 16 years. There had been no love lost between them, and their opposite pulls in the Congress organisation in the Punjab would only affect detrimentally the future of the erstwhile Akalis, who had joined the Congress and were seeking Congress tickets for the General Elections of 1957. Therefore, I suggested to Giani Kartar Singh and Hukam Singh that the only way that the erstwhile Akalis could function honourably in the Congress Organisation and adjust themselves to new conditions and win the confidence of the Congress leadership, was to bring about rapprochement between Partap Singh Kairon and Master Tara Singh and make them work together. It was also obvious that Partap Singh enjoyed the confidence of Pt. Nehru, the then Prime Minister, and U. N. Dhebar, the then President of the Congress. It was difficult nay impossible to expect that either would confide in new entrants into the Congress, and prefer them to Partap Singh Kairon. Rather, Nehru and Dhebar would depend more on Partap Singh Kairon to learn and guage the functioning of the erstwhile Akalis in the Congress Organisation. I told Master Tara Singh also that the differences between the two would end naturally, if a reconciliation could be brought about which would lead to smoothen working in the organisation and better understanding between the two groups which ultimately might facilitate the working of the Regional Formula. It was in such circumstances

that the two were got together for talks, and Partap Singh Kairon came to the house of Principal Niranjan Singh, brother of Master Tara Singh, where they deliberated for two hours. The talks were a failure, and both parted greater enemies. This was most unfortunate, and it again proved to be the turning point in the newly entered settlement and understanding between the Akali Dal and the Congress. Thereafter, all the efforts of Master Tara Singh were to degrade Partap Singh in the eyes of Pandit Nehru, whereas Partap Singh Kairon and his group tried to stand in the way of selection of Master Tara Singh's followers for the Congress tickets. Partap Singh could, and did act, more effectively in the Election Board, where he was also able to win or buy the co-operation of Giani Kartar Singh."

MASTER AND CONGRESS DRIFT APART

On the eve of 1957-second general elections, the Congress gave a quota of 26 seats to the Akali Dal and that too after a long of bargaining. The final list provoked a revolt and Master set up 22 candidates (Panthic candidates) of his own. In a press conference held on 14-2-57, Master stated : "Now I am not bound by the Akali-Congress compromise because the Congress had dishonoured us. The members of the Congress High Command had assured us of giving representation to the Akalis in accordance with their position amongst the Sikhs, and had promised that the list of the Congress nominees for the General Elections would be finalised in consultation with me, but these assurances were not respected. How ridiculous to consider our position amongst the Sikhs to be such as to entitle us to not more than 1/3rd seats in the Vidhan Sabha which the Congress has allowed us." 36.

1957—ELECTION RESULTS

The election results were out in March, 1957, and the party-wise position in the house of 154 members was Congress 120 ; Jan Sangh 9 ; Communists 6 ; P. S. P. 1 ; and Independents 18. None of Master's candidates succeeded. Kairon was unanimously elected as the leader of the Congress Assembly Party on 2/4/57. Giani Kartar Singh, S. Rarewala, Pt. Mohan lal, Rao Birendra Singh, S. Gurbanta Singh and Pt. Amar Nath Vidylankar were taken as Ministers by S. Kairon on 9/4. Prof. Yashwant Rai, Dr. Parkash Kaur, Mr. Yash Pal, Ch. Dalbir Singh and Mr. Banarsi Dass were sworn in as the Deputy Ministers. Ch. Suraj Mal also joined the Cabinet as a minister on 17/4/57.

"The 1957 election opened the Kairon era of carrot and stick. The

carrot was meant for the less recalcitrant of the Chief Minister's adversaries and the stick for the more so. His No. 1 adversary outside the party fold was Master Tara Singh...Yet an early challenge to his leadership came not from the Master but from another quarter—the newly formed Hindi Raksha Samiti (Save Hindi Committee). The Samiti viewed with alarm the impending enforcement of the regional formula which, it felt sure, contained the seeds of a second partition of Punjab. But its charter of demands was confined to secure for Hindi the same status as was accorded to Punjabi. The Samiti insisted on the replacement of the two formulas on the medium of instruction, the Sachar Formula and the PEPSU Formnla, by a more acceptable one...On the question of a medium it was emphatic that this should be left to the free choice of parents. The government announced a concession or two, such as its willingness to make Hindi translations available of its notifications in Punjabi and to mantain official records at the district level in both Gurmukhi and Devanagri scripts. But the agitation continued to rage for seven long months, led by *sadhus* in their flowing saffron robes. In Chandigarh, the scene of the "Save Hindi" movement, the passive resisters set new standards of blocking the traffic. Their prostrate bodies had to be pulled away. It was not until the Union Home Minister, Pandit Pant, went to Chandigarh to make a personal appeal to the Samiti leaders that normalcy was restored.37



Late Sant Gurbachan Singh Khalsa (Bhindran Wale Sant) who imparted Sikh teachings to thousands through his roving school. He bitterly opposed 'Santdom'. He was held in high esteem by the Sikhs.

5—MILE LONG MOURNING PROCESSION BY THE AKALI DAL AGAINST THE SACRILEGES DONE TO THE SIKH GURDWARAS

In the morcha started by the Arya Samajists in 1957, "most provocative, insulting, abusive and offensive lectures were delivered and slogans raised by the leaders of this morcha against the Sikhs, the Sikh religion, the Sikh leaders and the Sikh religious symbols." In the first week of July, 1957, several cigarette cases were thrown into the sacred tank

of Golden Temple, Amritsar. On 1/8/57, pages of Gurbani were torn and scattered on the road leading from Chowk Lachhmansar to Chati-wind Gate, Amritsar. On 16/8/1957, a packet of cigarettes was found thrown in Gurdwara Sikh Sewak Jatha, Patiala, and a similar incident took place in Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Hissar, on 13/9/1957. On 24/12/1957, the tobacco packet was thrown in the sacred tank of Golden Temple and a poster contained therein talked of threats to the Sikh people. Very provocative and insulting speeches were made by leaders of Hindi Raksha Samiti against Sikhs and their religion. In processions of Ambala and Jamanagar, the following shout had been constantly repeated:

'Ura Aira Nahin Parhenge,
Gandi Bhasha Nahin Parhenge

(We shall not read the Alphabet of the filthy language i. e. Punjabi). Mahasha Zorawar Nand of Meerut said at Ambala. "I have heard that some people raise slogan "Dhoti Topi Jamna Par" we shall in reply raise slogan "Kainchi Ustra Karo Tiar". At Patiala Swami Rameshwaranand said, "Kainchi Ustra Karo Tiar". (Get ready scissors and razors). At Jagadhri Sohan Lal Tiwari said, "If the Sikhs wish to live here, they shall have to shave off and take Hindu appearance," etc. etc."

Master Ji in the capacity of President of the Akali Dal and the SGPC issued a written statement mentioning the reasons as to why the silent procession of protest was being taken out at Delhi on February 2, 1958. He stated: "...I may mention here that it appears that the Punjab Government is planning some sort of offensive against the Sikhs. When we made settlement with the Government in 1955, we had complained of undue and mala fide interference in Gurdwara management by the Punjab Government immediately after our winning Gurdwara elections. We were assured that our complaints which could be removed shall be removed. But no single complaint of high handedness was removed. I have no complaint against Government of India in this respect, for I never brought this high handedness to their notice. It was the sphere of the Punjab Government and I tried to persuade the Punjab Government to see sense and rectify the mistake, but I failed. After the end of Hindi Raksha morcha, the Punjab Government has come out with redoubled zeal to interfere in the management of our Gurdwaras. A so-called Malwa Akali Dal has been organised overnight and the Chief Minister after dissolving the Pepsu Gurdwara Interim Board has reconstituted it giving this new Malwa Akali Dal number of members equal to that given to the Shiromani Akali Dal...Why should these fresh attacks upon our Gurdwara manage-

ment by the Punjab Government coincide with the postponement of the Hindi Morcha? Is there some concerted plan?...I blame Arya Samajist leaders for the most offensive attacks which are being committed against Sikh religion...Religion should be the last thing in which our secular government should interfere; and Government should consider itself bound to protect the freedom and especially the religious freedom of every minority...

We have taken out this mourning procession in order to draw the attention of the world to our pitiable condition. Most insulting and unparallelled sacrilegious acts are being committed to demoralise us. We have been perfectly peaceful and calm inspite of these worst sorts of provocations. Our opponents have so far failed to incite us to retaliate... We mean to live and live with honour. 38. On 2/2/58, 5—mile long silent procession was taken out from Red Fort, Delhi, at 1 P.M and it dispersed at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib. The Tribune gave the number of the participants as 1,50,000. It was led by Giani Bhupinder Singh head Granthi of the Golden Temple, while Swami Ganesh Dutt also joined it along with other Akali leaders.

KAIRON WINS THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE BUT MASTER LOSES IN S. G. P. C.

("...Of the infinite desires of man, the chief are the desires of power and glory...")

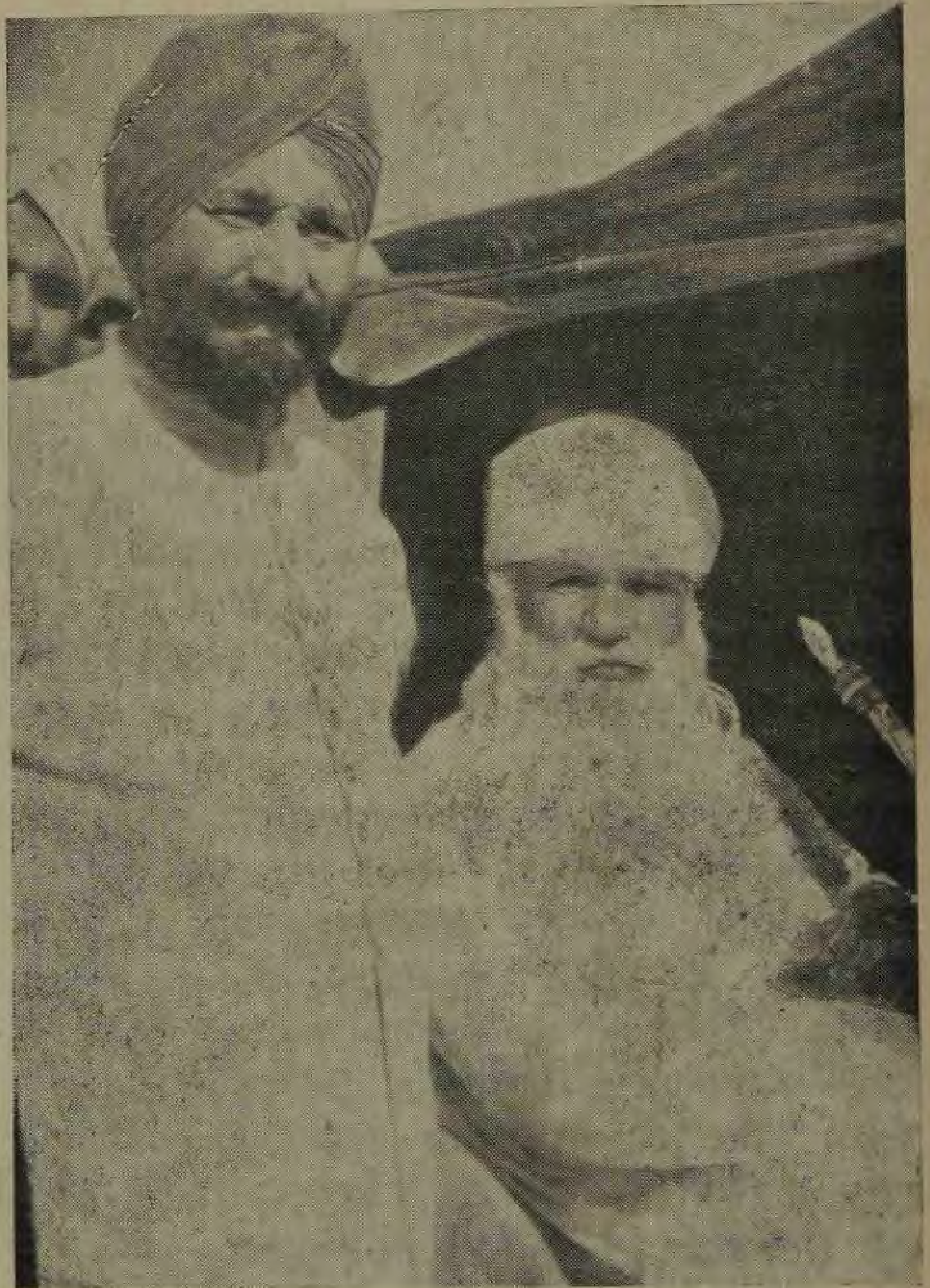
"The Hindi agitation suited the Chief Minister who himself was not overenthusiastic about implementing the regional formula which, for all its inadequacies, constituted a serious derogation from his powers. It provided him with a pretext for delaying implementation. But the Regional Committees had to be constituted. And they were, Seth Ram Nath, a pro-Akali Congress man, was elected Chairman of the Punjabi Regional Committee and Balwantrai Tayal of the Hindi Regional Committee. Neither of these dignitaries was well disposed towards the Chief Minister. Indeed, their choice was intended to be a slap in his face... It was clear that the Chief Minister was facing considerable opposition within the ruling party. He had hardly been two years in office before allegations of corruption against members of his family were openly levelled by Prabodh Chandra, a senior member of the party. Later a charge sheet was submitted to the central leadership. After going through the allegations, U. N. Dhebar, who was Congress President, held the Chief Minister constructively responsible for the alleged misdeeds of members of his family. In June 1958, Kairon was required to seek a vote of

confidence in his leadership. Nehru went to his rescue by ridiculing, on the eve of the Punjab Legislature Congress Party's meeting to decide on the proposed motion, the theory of "constructive responsibility." He let it be widely known that he disbelieved that the Chief Minister was dishonest. This timely clean chit enabled Kairon to ride out the storm. He seized the opportunity of the renewal of confidence in his leadership to mend his fences." 39 "A meeting of the Congress Assembly Party was called on the 5th June, 1958, in pursuance of the conclusion of the Congress Working Committee in its meeting of the 19th May, 1958. The supporters of Partap Singh began making vigorous efforts to woo and win every member of the Congress Legislative party by every possible method in order to secure an overwhelming majority, which would wash out the loss of prestige, he had suffered as a result of the findings of the Central Parliamentary Board." 40.

After winning the vote of confidence with 102 votes in favour and 54 against, Kairon wanted to teach a lesson to the M.L.As. who had opposed him, consequently, he sought the permission of the High Command to reshuffle his ministry but on 10/6/1958, his request was turned down. Giani Kartar Singh was not dropped but in order to humiliate him for backing the dissidents, he was deprived of his important portfolio of Revenue and Local Bodies and was made Minister of unimportant portfolios. Kairon was not interested in implementing the regional formula as he wanted to please the Arya Samajists and the Samiti leaders, who were opposed to the formula and who had stood by him on 5/6/58. This conclusion is fully borne out by his speeches and actions. He wanted to create a rift in Akali Dal and he could not think and plan it better than to put S. Rarewala and Giani Kartar Singh against Master Ji in the S.G.P.C. On 16/9/58, Master stated at Delhi that if Sikhs' aspirations were not satisfied, he would renew his demand for Punjabi-speaking State since the regional formula was not being honestly implemented. The first Punjabi Suba Conference held at Amritsar on 12/10/58, brought the confrontation to the climax, where the allegations against the Govt. were levelled for having backed out of its settlement relating to the Regional Formula. "No sooner had Master Tara Singh made such a declaration in early October, 1958, than the entire Punjab Government machinery was moved to oust him from the Presidentship of the SGPC. Giani Kartar Singh, as stated earlier, had been deprived of his important portfolios on August 19, 1958, on account of his part in the no-confidence motion. Thereafter, he made efforts to ingratiate himself with the Chief Minister Kairon by agreeing to become his instrument in ousting Master

Tara Singh from the Presidentship. Chief Minister Kairon could have found no better henchman than the Giani for the purpose. Giani Kartar Singh was successful in coalescing all the opposition groups including 22 Communists with his own group by promising them important offices in the executive of the SGPC and thereby he was able to defeat Master Tara Singh by 77 votes to 74 votes on the 16th November, 1958. The fact that he was also inspired by the Centre in this regard, was borne out by the interview which Giani Kartar Singh had with Home Minister Pant immediately after i. e., on the 2)th November, 1958, when he must have posted the Home Minister with the situation. The defeat of Master Tara Singh was applauded by the entire Punjab Hindu Press and declared as a vote against the Punjabi Suba issue."41

During those days, I was in Delhi and in the 3rd week of November, 1958, I accompanied Prof. J. S. Phul, the then President of the AISSF, to the residence of S. Hukam Singh where S. Prem Singh Lalpura, who defeated Master ji, was also present. Being a young man and dominated more by the heart than the head, I started addressing Lalpura most insultingly and I denounced him bell, book and candle so much so that he was dubbed as a 'traitor' and a 'treacherous' man but to my great surprise, he remained calm, unruffled and bore no ill—will. When the 'gun powder' in my 'artillery' stood finished, he embraced me and said, "Well Johnny, I appreciate your feelings but if and



S. Prem Singh Lalpura, now, the General Secretary of the Akali Dal, with Sant Fateh Singh.

when you join politics you might do worse; had you been in my position you might have done the same." When I interviewed Lalpura on 20. 6.78, at Chandigarh, and asked as to why he acted as a Congress tool against the great Sikh leader, he replied that Master had wriggled out of the undertaking, he gave to Giani Kartar Singh in the presence of S. Baldev Singh at Dumana on 17/8/58, according to which Master was to keep himself aloof from the SGPC, while the Giani's group was to give Master full and unconditional support in the Akali Dal. That statement of Lalpura could not be tested since neither Master, Giani, nor Baldev Singh are alive to refute or corroborate the same. Obviously, the defeat widened the rift between the Congress and the Sikhs, nevertheless, Giani succeeded in retrieving his position in the eyes of the Congress High Command by giving the worst possible defeat to the Sikh leader.

> "*Shama jalti hai Per, iss tara kahan jalti hai,*
> *Haddi haddi meri ai soze nihan jalti hai.*"*
> (Zafar)

The harrowing and agonising experience, I got on the election day, cannot be obliterated from my mind. The remorse in me wept the tears of blood, peace was gone and I could not lie quiet in bed for a couple of weeks. My sad-faced father's words, uttered after reading the news item of Master's defeat, are still fresh, as fresh as the dew, in my memory: "I am so sad today that even the death of all my children could not make me sadder" and that feeling, I think, was shared by almost every Sikh throughout the globe. They felt that through a well-knit conspiracy, the Government, of course, with the help of some Congress Sikh stooges, defeated Master for the sole purpose to divide and demoralise the Sikhs. The speech **delivered by Octavius in 'Julius Caesar' depicted their mood. (This defeat was avenged by the Sikhs in the SGPC elections held on 16/1/60, when the Akali Dal captured 136 out of 140 seats and 'Trio''s group was completely routed).

To the question as to why did Kairon, Rarewala and Giani combine together to defeat Master, indeed, with the connivance—if not at the active instigation—of the Congress High Command, the words of Bertrand Russell are relevant : "Between man and other animals there are various differences, some intellectual, some emotional. One of the chief emotional

*(The candle does burn not like me. The latent grief in my heart has extinguished even the marrow of my bones).

**(v-i 50-55)

differences is that some human desires, unlike those of animals, are essentially boundless and incapable of complete satisfaction. Imagination is the goad that forces human beings into restless exertion after their primary needs have been satisfied. To those who have but little of power and glory, it may seem that a little more would satisfy them, but in this they are mistaken ; these desires are insatiable and infinite, and only in the infinitude of God could they find repose. Of the infinite desires of man, the chief are the desires of power and glory".

"..... Aloof from the power, of price greed and coveting :
Such a man, saith Nanak, is the image of God."

(IX; Salok, Adi Granth)

MASTER'S DO OR DIE MISSION TO DELHI AGAINST THE GOVT.'S INTERFERENCE IN THE SIKH GURDWARAS

After harnessing all its resources, the Pb. Govt. manoeuvred to install its own nominee as the President of the S.G.P.C. by 3 votes. The Govt. was sure that the victory was short-lived as Master was sure to retrieve his position after emerging even more powerful. Therefore, some steps were taken to keep him out of power and that was the precise reason that "The Sikh Gurdwara Amandment Bill was resuscitated on the plea that representation was to be given to the Sikhs of the erstwhile Pepsu area on the S.G.P.C. after the merger. The objective was certainly laudable and the amendments were required, but it should have been appreciated that the general elections to the S. G. P. C. were only a year ahead, and amendments could be made thereafter. But the danger to the Congressite President of the S. G. P. C. was such, that the amendments in the Gurdwara Act could not wait. Therefore, it was proposed, that the executive of the S.G.P.C. along with then 13 members of the interim Gurdwara Board of Pepsu Area, and also the then 12 members co-opted from the Pepsu area in the S.G.P.C. would nominate 35 additional members of the Board (S. G. P.C.) to stuff it with reliable persons to keep Master Tara Singh out. A delegation headed by the Congressite President of the S.G.P.C waited upon the Chief Minister to press him to call a special session of the Assembly for early passage of the Gurdwara Amendment Bill on the above lines. The Chief Minister was responsive, and agreed to the proposition. The move so blatantly naked to oust Master Tara Singh, that it evoked a strong protest from the Sikhs at large.

Public opinion forced the Congress Ministry to change the intended provisions of the Bill to a more democratic and representative electoral college for the election of 35 representatives of the erstwhile area of Pepsu in Punjab. Hence it was decided that electoral college should comprise about 3000 Sikh voters, including Sikh legislators of Parliament and both Houses in the State from the Pepsu area, heads of the registered Sikh institutes, Sikh members of the Municipal Committees in Pepsu, Sikh Sarpanches of all Panchayats in Pepsu and the then 12 members of the interim Gurdwara Board of the Pepsu area." 42. The Sikh Gurdwaras (Amendment) Act, 1959, became the law of the land with effect from 8/1/59.

On 1/2/59, Master Ji announced his "do or die mission" to Delhi against the Govt.'s interference in the Sikh Gurdwaras and stated, "I shall never return from Delhi and will lay down my life if Govt. does not amend its decision to interfere in the Gurdwara affairs". In the Dharam Rakshak (Religious Protection) Conference, 6-week campaign was inaugurated by Master and it was to culminate in the mass demonstration in Delhi on March 15, before the Parliament. Master made a bitter attack against Giani Kartar Singh for giving a blow to Sikhism in raising a Jat and non Jat question.



The reaction of the Indian Express dated 2/1/59, towards Master's Do or Die Mission.

On 13/2, Master was elected as Akali Dal's President. In the meeting, more powers were conferred on the President by amending the Dal's constitution. Power was given to the President to suspend any member for anti-Panthic activities and it was also provided that vote of no confidence against the President could be carried only by the majority of the total strength of the House and not by a majority of the members present.

The Dal's Working Committee met on 6/3, and it resolved that Master was to go to Delhi on 14/3, so that the final programme with

regard to the demonstration at Delhi be finalised. However, he was arrested by the police from his residence at 11-30 P. M. on 12/3/59. He was taken to Dharamsala Jail. Master's arrest caused wide-spread gloom and despair and made the already angry Sikhs more furious and agitated and they, then, deemed it their solemn and sacred duty to make the procession at Delhi a great success. According to the wishes of Master Ji, Sant Fateh Singh was appointed as Dal's Acting President. I myself had joined and witnessed the silent march of the Sikhs on 15/3, being a Law Final student in the Delhi University. It was altogether a sea of humanity with more than 4 lakhs of Sikhs participating in the silent procession. The unprecedented huge gathering had assembled despite the cancellation of all special trains which were arranged for bringing people from Pb. to the Capital. In order to stop the Sikhs from joining the procession, the permits of the buses were cancelled. It is really difficult to put in writing the excellent discipline and the orderliness, the Sikhs were able to demonstrate in the well-behaved silent protest march. A huge portrait of Master was displayed in a truck and the Sikhs marched behind five abreast down the main bazars of Delhi.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN NEHRU AND MASTER

Master Ji in his communication from Dharamsala Jail wrote to the Prime Minister suggesting arbitration on the issue of Govt.'s interference in the Sikhs' religious affairs. Master got the reply on 21/3, through which Pt. Nehru rejected the arbitration proposal. The Statesman dated 23/3, reports : "Mr. Nehru is reported to have disagreed with Master Tara Singh's proposal that the latter's grievances be referred to arbitration. But he has suggested that the presence of Acharya Vinoba Bhave in Punjab next month "may well be utilized to remove any doubts and difficulties in future." In his recent correspondence with Mr. Nehru, Master Tara Singh had suggested that an impartial person should arbitrate on the question whether the Punjab Government had interfered in the religious affairs of the Sikhs by passing the Sikh



Cartoon published in the Times of India relating to the proposed arbitration suggested by Master Tara Singh.

Gurdwaras Amendment Act. He had particularly questioned the motives of Giani Kartar Singh, Punjab's Minister for Agriculture.He had proposed that his complaints be referred to Acharya Vinobha Bhave, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, or Mr. Jai Prakash Narain or "all of them." Mr. Nehru's reply was delivered to Master Tara Singh at Yol Camp in Dharamsala yesterday (21/3/1959) just before his release. Mr. Nehru is understood to have explained in the letter that it would be unprecedented to refer an Act passed by a legislature to arbitration. Further it was not clear what exactly was to be referred to arbitration. Clear and precise issue had not been raised and the alleged motives of a particular individual were too vague a matter for inquiry..."

Master was released on 21/3/59, on the intervention of the Central Govt. While making a statement at Amritsar, the next day, he declared that the communication received by him from the P. M. prior to the release at Dharamsala was not satisfactory but he wanted to consult his friends and sympethisers to explore the possibility for an amicable and honourable settlement. Master addressed a very big conference at Anandpur Sahib on 24/3 and dwelt at length about the Govt.'s interference. On 27/3/59, the Working Committee of the Dal met at Delhi and Nehru's letter came up for discussion. A committee of 7 persons was constituted to draft the reply to the above letter. The stand for arbitration was reiterated and the names of Jai Parkash Narain, Rajagopalachari and Vinoba Bhave were suggested for arbitration.

MASTER'S DECLARATION TO GO ON FAST

On March 29, 1959, Master Ji addressed a public meeting at Delhi and stated that he would furnish the details as to how and when the fast-unto death was to be resorted to and that the reply of the P.M. was being awaited. On 4/3, Pt. Nehru stated that Master's demand for arbitration was 'un-precedented' and on the same day, Master announced in Gurdwara Sis Ganj that there would be a wide-spread but peaceful agitation against the Govt.'s interference. Master



(The cartoon published in the daily Partap reacting to the proposed fast of Master Ji.)

declared on 6/4, that he was to go on the fast-unto death on 16/4/59, as the Arbitration Proposal had been rejected and all the other methods to get justice had failed. Akali Dal announced that on the date of the proposed fast, there was to be mass fasting and general strike against the Govt.'s interference in the religious affairs of the Sikhs. On 8/4, Nehru wrote a letter to Master advising him not to go on hunger strike. On the receipt of the letter, Master said that he was to send the reply after consulting his associates.

PROPOSED FAST CANCELLED.

The news of the fast created a great anxiety in all the circles and every one irrespective of the political affiliations wanted some settlement between the Akalis and the Govt. At the instance of well-meaning persons, including Malik Hardit Singh and Malik Mukhbain Singh, Pt. Ji and Master Ji met together over a cup of tea on 12/4, and agreed to the appointment of a 4—man committee which was to consist of 2 nominees of the Pb. Govt., while the remaining 2 were to be suggested by Master, so that the allegations of Govt.'s interference in the Gurdwaras could be enquired into and some remedial measures be taken in case the interference stood proved.

NEHRU-TARA SINGH PACT

In the above meeting, it was mutually agreed between the P. M. and Master Ji, that the Govt. will not interfere in the religious affairs; and that a machinery be set up to ensure the implementation of the policy of non-interference in the Gurdwaras' management and to consider any complaint of such interferencc. A committee was also to be set up consisting of 4 members, out of which 2 were to be nominated by the Pb. Govt., while the remaining 2 were to be appointed by the President of the Akali Dal. In case of disagreement, the reference was to be made to the Pb. Governor for advice. It was also agreed that in future, no amendment was to be made in the Sikh Gurdwaras Act unless it was approved of by a two-third majority of the members. If there was any difficulty about the implementation of the above proposals, Pt. Nehru was to assist in solving the same.

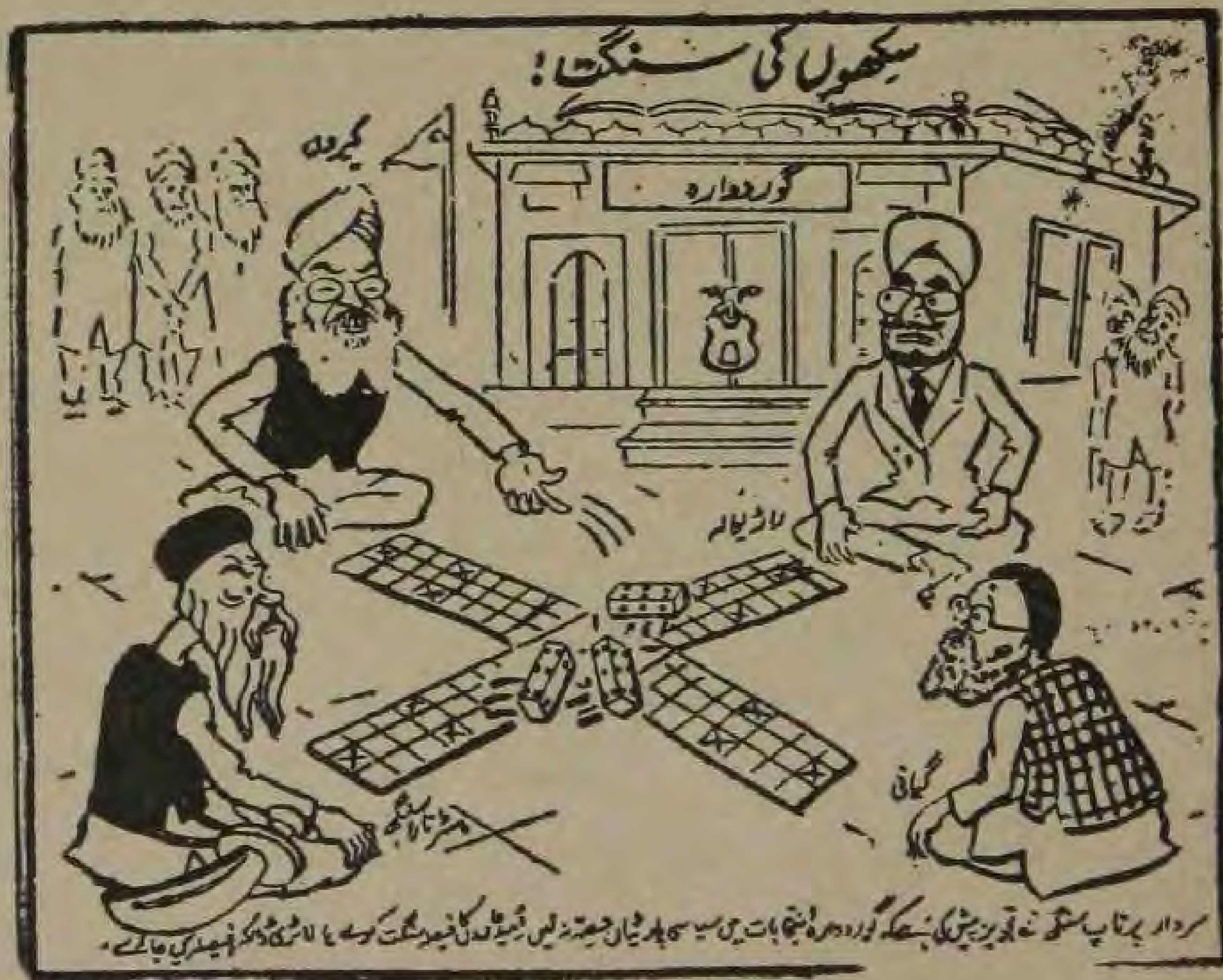
The Pb. Govt. nominated Giani Kartar Singh and Jathedar Mohan Singh. S. Buta Singh and Malik Mukhbain Singh were the nominees of Master Ji. Mr. Jai Parkash Narain's name was proposed by Akali Dal in the beginning, but he declined as he had no spare time. The committee could not go ahead as Giani proved to be the stumbling block.



Malik Mukhbain Singh (facing the camera) is seen addressing the delegates in the Training Camp of AISSF held in 1959, at Gurdwara Majnu Tilla Sahib. S. Ambalvi and Late S. Gojran are also seen in the picture.

PREPARATION FOR 1960—S. G. P. C. ELECTIONS

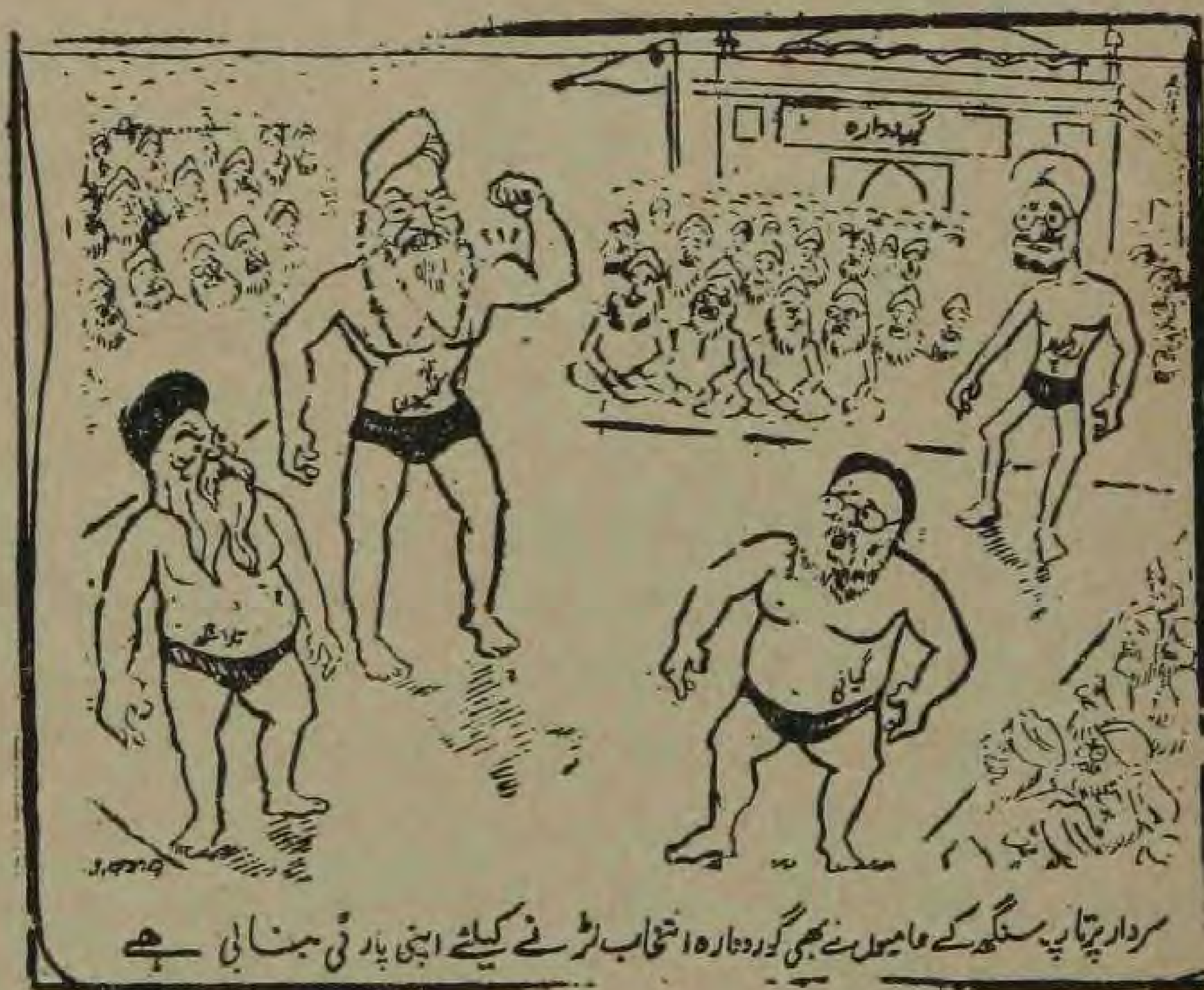
The Akali Dal was to contest the elections to the Sikh Gurdwaras on the issue of Punjabi-speaking State, while the Congress leaders were eager to prove that the above demand did not cut ice with the Sikhs, hence, the show down between the Akalis and the Govt. was unavoidable. However, the Maharaja Patiala suggested that instead of holding the elections, the members be chosen by the Sangat (common



The Maharaja of Patiala proposed that the members of the SGPC be chosen by the Sangat or by drawing lots. Kairon supported the proposal. Cartoon relating to the above suggestion was published in the Partap dt. 11/7/59.

people) or in case of difficulty, the matter be decided by drawing lots inside the Gurdwara premises. On 8/4/59, Kairon issued a statement that the best way to end the bitterness between the Govt. and the Akalis was to follow the proposal suggested by the Maharaja. Master, however, called it a movemeant to confuse the people, but he favoured the suggestion that the legislators should not participate in the Gurdwara Elections.

On 7/5/59, Master declared at Ludhiana, that he would fight the S. G. P. C. Elections on the Punjabi Suba issue. The Pb. Govt. was determined to prove that the demand was not being backed by the majority of the Sikhs. Kairon, Rarewala and Kartar Singh (Giani) jointly sponsored Sadh Sangat Board, which was to oppose the Dal in the coming elections. Because of a great hue and cry against the Govt.'s interference in the Gurdwaras particularly by Giani Kartar Singh, the latter was constrained to resign his ministership on 24/10/59. He explained that he resigned as his entire energy and time were to be devoted in the fighting of the Gurdwara elections.



Cartoon published in the Daily Partap : "The supporter of S. Partap Singh have organised themselves into a party to contest the Gurdwara elections."

MASTER-LALPURA PACT ABOUT THE DELHI GURDWARA PRABANDHAK COMMITTEE

In order to deprive the Akali Dal of all the financial help coming from the D. G. P. C., Giani Kartar Singh planned to oust the control of Master's group from the committee. Lalpura had already suspended the D.G.P C. on 20/5/59. It was replaced by a 11-man committee with Sajjan Singh as the President. As the committee failed to take the control of the D.G.P.C., about 100 persons fully armed to the teeth were sent to Gurdwara Sis Ganj, Delhi, for taking the forcible possession, but that attempt of Giani and Lalpura, (President of the S.G.P.C.) was foiled by Master's group which was already in possession of the D.G.P C. During the show-down, tear-gas shells were used and more than 68 persons were taken into custody.

On 25/5, Master Tara Singh addressed a big public meeting in Delhi and expressed his desire to constitute a volunteer force of 1000 persons to prevent the S.G.P.C. from taking the Delhi Gurdwaras into illegal possesion. At the intervention of some respectables, an agreement was signed by Master and Lalpura on 30/5/59, at the residence of Baldev Singh and in its light, S. Baldev Singh and Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafir were to act as the arbitrators for controlling the management of the Gurdwaras in Delhi. They were to continue to manage the Delhi Gurdwaras so long as a new committee was not set up. The new committee was to comprise the persons who were to be acceptable to both the groups.

AKALI DAL VICTORIOUS IN THE 1960–S. G. P. C. ELECTIONS

When Kairon, Rarewala and Kartar Singh (Giani) found that the Akali Dal might sweep away the poll, they got an electoral alliance reached on 30/12/59, between Sadh Sangat Board and Desh Bhagat Board, a pro-communist organisation.

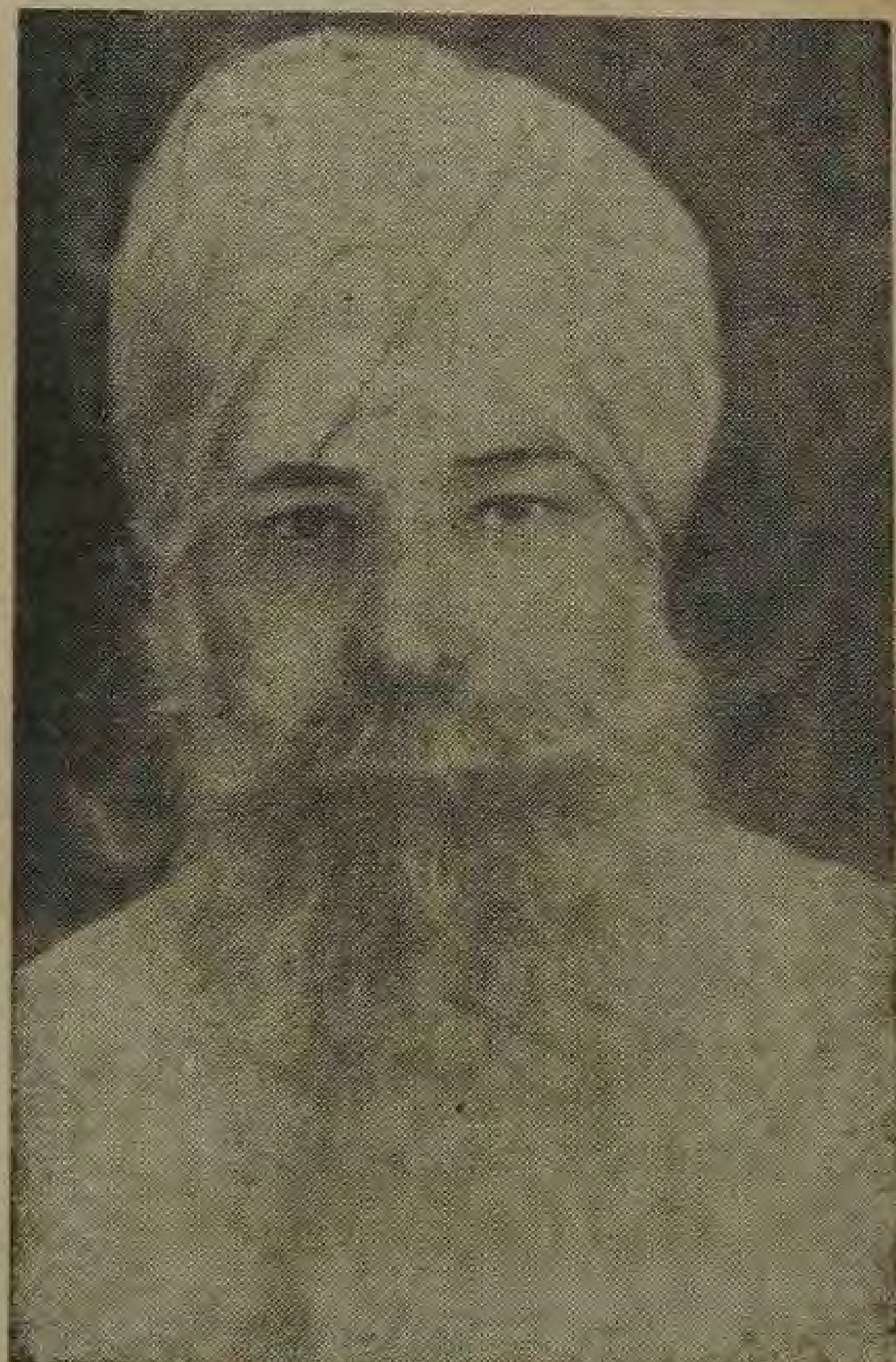
In spite of the fact that Kairon, Hukam Singh, Rarewala and Kartar Singh (Giani) did not leave any stone unturned in winning the S. G. P. C. elections, they could not cut the Akali Dal down to size as was quite clear from election results. On 16/1/60, about 18,50,000 Sikhs went to the S. G. P. C. poll to elect 136 members. Before that elections, the public opinion was already surcharged in favour of the Punjabi Suba demand and it was expected that Akali Dal might win the elections, but the land-slide victory declared on 19/1, proved how popular the Punjabi Suba slogan had become with the Sikhs. Akali Dal, Sadh Sangat Board and a Pro-Communist Desh Bhagat Board were in the field. Akali Dal secured 132 seats, while 4 went to Sadh Sangat Board. Desh Bhagat Board stood completely routed for it could not win even a single seat.

DAL'S CALL TO AKALI LEGISLATORS TO QUIT

A meeting between Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh was held at Jullundur on October 6, 58, where the question of continuing with the old pol. settlement with the Congress was discussed. Giani at that time wanted the Dal not to engage itself in pol. activities, but Master was determined to achieve Punjabi-speaking State. Because of that dead-lock, Giani decided to quit the Dal. On 5/1/59, the Working Committee of the Akali Dal revoked the pact with the Congress and decided to contest the elections on its own ticket. The momentous decision to quit the congress was taken by the Working Committee at Anandpur Sahib on the occasion of the Hola festival. The call to quit Congress was given on 15/3/60, by Master to Akalis, who had joined

congress in or after 1956. The reasons for doing so were that the Govt was interfering in the religious affairs of the Sikhs, the Regional Formula was reduced to a dead letter; and that the Congress was opposing the demand of Punjabi-speaking State. Out of 24 Akali M. L. As.. Sarup Singh, Atma Singh, Hargurnad Singh, Udham Singh and Partap Singh (Master) resigned from the Congress.

S. Ajit Singh Bala. When Master ji resigned from the Presidentship of SGPC on 30/4/60, for putting his heart and soul into the Punjabi Suba struggle, Bala was elected in Master's place. On his elevation, the Rupar Akali Jatha honoured him at Gurdwara Bhatte Sahib. In one of the welcome speeches, he was cautioned not to let the office go to his head. Bala replied, "There is a possibility of my getting arrogant, but there is a remedy for that. Whenever you find me giving airs or with a swelled head, you will kindly hesitate not in beating my head with you shoes."



AKALI MASS AGITATION COMMENCES WITH MASTER'S ARREST ON 24-5-60

On January 24, 1960, the newly elected members of SGPC, who contested and succeeded on Akali ticket, took the pledge at Akal Takhat to sacrifice every thing at the behest of the Dal for achieving Punjabi-speaking State. On 7/3/60, the Dal decided to boycott 26—member committee appointed by the State Govt. to consider the language issue. Master, who was unanimously elected as the President of the SGPC at a general meeting convened on 7/3/60, also resigned from the Presidentship on 30/4, for devoting his entire time and energy to attain Punjabi Suba. On 22/5/60, a Punjabi Suba Convention was called at Amritsar which was addressed by non-Sikh leaders as well. Members of Swatantra Party, S.S.P. P.S.P. supported the call for Punjabi Suba. Pt. Sunder Lal presided while Dr. Saifud-din Kitchlu of martial law fame and once a very prominent leader of the Congress, inaugurated the convention. A resulutioa was passed for the formation of Punjabi Suba being expedited particularly when other States had been carved out on linguistic basis.


S. Darbara Singh, the then Punjab Congress Chief, who tried to excel Kairon in opposing the Punjabi Suba demand root and branch.

The Working Committee of the Akali Dal decided that on the day of Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom i. e. May 29, 1960, Master Ji was to start with a *sahidi jatha* (a group of potential martyrs) consisting of 11 members. It was to move through the State reaching Delhi in about a fortnight's time to head a massive procession to be taken out on June 12, 1960. The Sikhs were called upon to be prepared for a *dharam yudh* (religious crusade) and to come forth "with their heads on their palms" so as to contribute towards the success of the agitation as it was to be a battle to the finish. The support to the Punjabi Suba demand provoked the Congress Chief S. Darbara Singh to make highly irresponsible charges against Master Ji.

In those days Kairon was the target of a frontal attack by the dissident congress-men. In order to save himself from the impending onslaught, he got Master along with 5 Akali M.L.As. arrested on 24/5/60, under the Preventive Detention Act. The agitation was perfectly peaceful and non-violent and the decision to take out a procession was in the exercise of the legitimate and democratic right, but Kairon was all and all out to create a turmoil in the State. He sought to dramatise as if the Akali Dal was bent upon to create lawlessness and anarchy and that it was he and he alone who could control the conflagratory situation. Thousands of Sikhs were arrested under sections 107/151 Cr. P. C. and heavy bail bonds starting from Rs. 50,0(0/- to Rs. 1,00,000/- were demanded by the Magistracy ; the Sikh press was gagged and it appeared as if the doomsday had approached. He precipitated the crisis by arresting almost all pro-Akali M. L. As., members of the SGPC, lawyers and other important people from every walk of life. False cases were concocted against the sympathisers of the movement.

Ispite of all this, the Akali Dal sent 11-member *Jatha* to Delhi as scheduled on 20/5/60. As expected, the *Jatha* was arrested near Amritsar. The other *Jathas*, sent later on, were also taken into custody somuch so that by 7/6, more than 1705 arrests had taken place. "The Akali Dal became embroiled in a struggle not of its own choosing. With the start of the struggle the passages to the Golden Temple were practically

blocked, as the police would harass the Sikhs going there from the bus stand, the Railway Station and other places, in order to stop the 'Satyagraha' by the Jathas, even the Sikhs coming from the city were interrogated and humiliated and some who stated that they were going to Sri Darbar Sahib to pay homage or have a dip in the holy tank, were arrested under section 107/151 Criminal Procedure Code. This could not be taken lying down. The movement started from the precincts of Sri Darbar Shib, which became the headquarters from where the Jathas moved down. The repressive measures of the Government were such that the organisers had to choose Sri Darbar Sahib as the centre of the movement from which the volunteers came out and courted arrest. The leaders were at the Akal Takhat. Daily dewans were held at Sri Manji Sahib within the precincts of Sri Darbar Sahib...The movement gained momentum, as the time lapsed. Every day Jathas would come out of the precincts of the Darbar Sahib, peacefully and calmly, and court arrest, and it was claimed that by July 25, 1960, 17, 821 Akalis had been arrested at Amritsar alone. The routine courting of arrest at Amritsar was 21 daily, whereas it was 11 at Delhi, but more persons courted arrest when there was insistence by those gathered there."43

On 2/6, A. S. I. Khushwant Rai was got shot dead so that the tension between the Hindus and the Sikhs could develop endangering the peaceful nature and trend of the agitation, but the Govt. failed in its plan. Depiste the reign of terror, injustice and unprecedented repression, perpetrated on the Sikhs, the agitation was wonderfully peaceful and orderly.

AKALI PROCESSION OF JUNE 12, 1960, AT DELHI

The lack of administrative and political dexterity and the shortsightedness coupled with the narrow-mindedness of the Delhi Administration was responsible for the initiation of the Akali agitation in the capital of India. Rachhpal Singh, the then President of the Delhi State Akali Dal, made it clear that the Akali procession would be taken out on 12/6/60, as per schedule and if any ban was imposed, the same would be defied. Inspite of the fact that to take out a peaceful procession was the democratic right, the ban under section 144 Cr. P. C. was imposed w. e. f. June 9. The Delhi authorities blocked all the routes and approaches so much so that hundreds of Sikhs were detained at the border of Delhi. "The first batch of 11, in Jathas of 4 each, led by Harbans Singh, came out at 4 P. M. on the 12th June, having pledged themselves to non-violence. They had been directed to recite only 'Sat Nam Sri Waheguru' and when this batch, in formation of 4, reached the

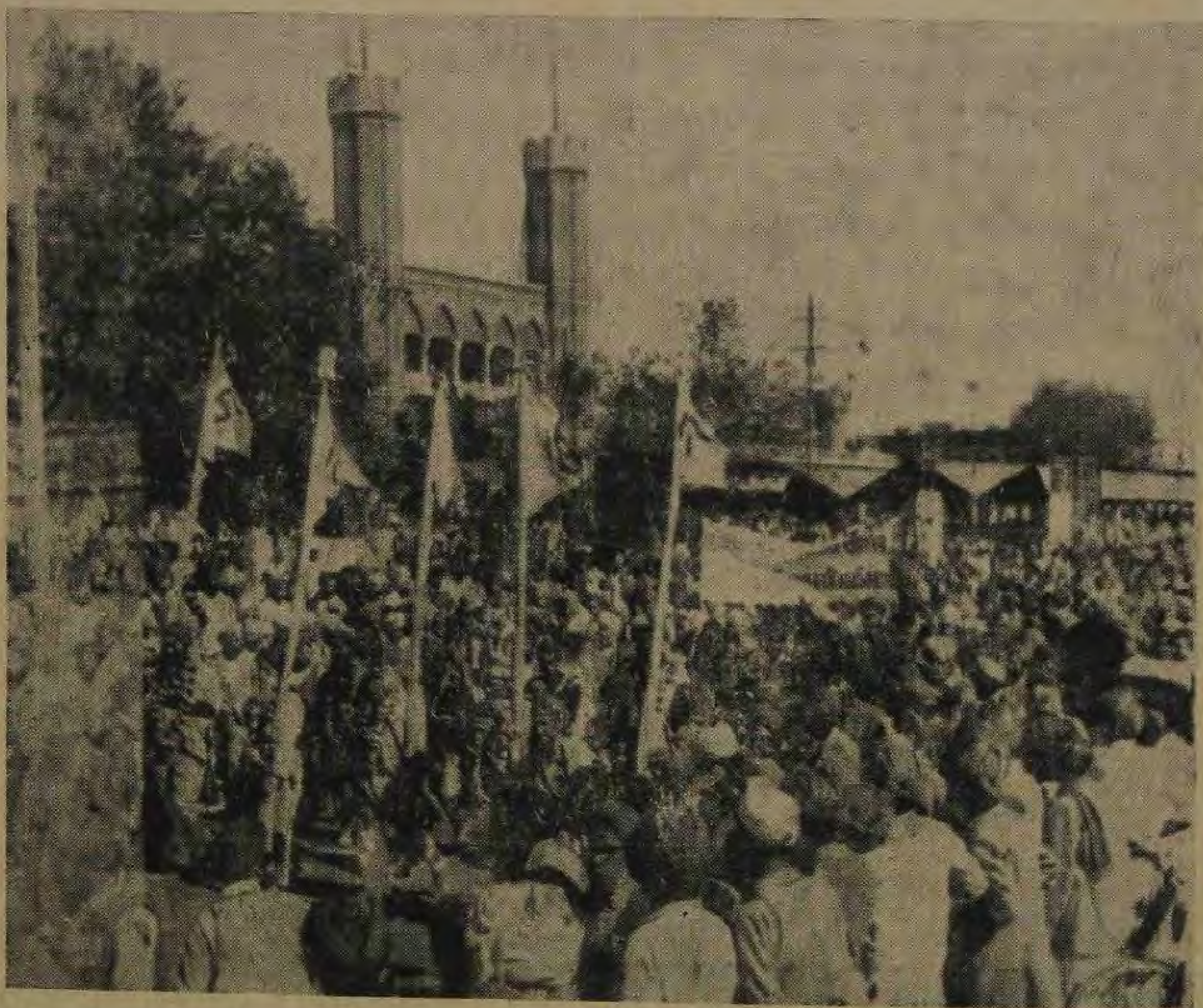
clock tower, the police rained lathi blows on them, and also charged with lathis the people who had collected in front of the Town Hall and of Gurdwara Sis Ganj. A large number of men, women and children were injured, either by lathis or during the stampede. (One could see to believe the humiliation the Sikhs suffered at the hands of the police.) The police threw a volley of tear gas, bombs and the entire atmosphere was charged with smoke. This went on for a long time. The Sikhs were hounded out everywhere, even from cafes, restaurants and shops, but they remained peaceful. The police continued their lathi charge till 7 p. m. Delhi had never seen in its living memory such repression of the nature. Nearly 2,000 Sikhs were arrested on that day, and many were seriously injured. The President of the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee of Delhi State waited in a deputation, along with other members, on the Prime Minister on the 20th June, demanding a judicial probe into excesses committed by the police, but there was no response. The Akali Dal, thereafter, started sending 11 volunteers a day to court arrest, and by the 25th July the total arrests there were 2390." (44).

Notwithstanding such heart-rending and hair raising scenes, the conscience of the Congress High Command did not feel pricked ; rather



(In the Akali agitation, the ladies took a very active part. They courted arrests in thousands even along with their minor children. This Jatha was arrested on 26-6-60, and was led by Bibi Narinder Kaur and Bibi Gian Kaur of Tarn Taran.)

SCENES OF AKALI PROCESSION TAKEN OUT ON JUNE 12, 1960





SCENES OF AKALI PROCESSION TAKEN OUT ON JUNE 12, 1960



Sikh Processionalists being brutally beaten by the Delhi Police.



S. Rachhpal Singh, the then President of the Delhi State Akali Dal.



One of the scenes of the procession (June 12, 1960)

some Hindus and Sikhs in the Congress were trying to surpass each other in condemning the Akali agitation and that too in the name of democracy and secularism. A deputation of Arya Samajists assured Pt. Nehru on 16/6, that the Hindus were at his beck and call that they were to fully co-operate in the maintenance of law and order and that the success in the Akali agitation would facilitate the making of Punjabi Suba. Iqbal Singh, Majhael, Kartar Singh (Giani) Santokh Singh of Delhi, Ajit Singh M. P. of Bhatinda, Gopal Singh Dardi, and others made highly uncharitable remarks against the Movement. The High Command was equally determined not to concede the demand. Nevertheless, the Govt. was not unmindful of the tremendous impact, the agitation was causing particularly on the Sikhs' minds. It issued an ordinance declaring that Punjabi would be the official language at the distt. level w.e.f. 2/10/60.

BHATINDA AND PATIALA FIRINGS ON AKALIS

Due to the over-crowding in the jails because of the Akali prisoners, the Pb. Govt. started releasing the Satyagrahis as the Govt's exchequer was put to a great strain. However, it concocted the plea that only those persons were being released who had tendered their unqualified apologies for having associated themselves with the Punjabi-Subha Agitation. Harbans Singh Gujral, the then Chief Adviser of the Dal, sent messages to the Akali leaders, lodged in the various jails, that they should allow only that person to be released who would get the certificate from the Jail Superintendent certifying : "He has been unconditionally released on account of no evidence having been produced against him by the prosecution. He has expressed no regret or disassociation from either the Punjabi Suba movement or the Shiromani Akali Dal in any way."

When the under-trials in Bhatinda jail got ration, it was found to be less than the usual quota and on enquiry, it transpired that ration for 250 had been held up. It created a suspicion that persons numbering 250 were being released on the false ground of their having disassociated themselves from the Movement, and, thus, they insisted for a certificate. When the under-trials insisted for the certificates being issued, they were fired on 9/10, killing Sardars Nazar Singh of Vairo wal, Chanchal Singh of Sultan Wind, Jaswant Singh of Kot Dasaundhi Mal and Ranjit Singh of Sarai Talwandi, all belonging to District Amritsar. When that incident took place, I was lodged in Central Jail, Ferozepur, and the inmates of the Jail came to know about it through the radio. I still recall the reaction, a subtle blend of sadness, conster-

nation and infuriation, the grim-faced Akali prisoners had at that time.

Similarly, on 11/10, 2 persons were killed at the spot when the Akali Procession taken out from Gurdwara Dukhniwaran Sahib at Patiala was proceeding towards the Railway Crossing. The police manufactured the plea that they fired because of the brick-batting upon them. On October 30, Mr. Ashok Mehta, the then Chairman of the Praja Socialist Party, warned the govt. that the situation would be out of control if measures were not taken for fulfilling the Punjabi Suba Demand and he along with Dr. P. C. Gosh and Mr. Kriplani met Pt. Nehru on 1/11 in that connection. Mr. M. S. Golwalker, R.S.S. Chief, came to Pb. and examined the situation himself. He called a spade a spade and asked the Hindus to own their mother tongue. Referring to the script issue, he said that only those persons had the right to determine the script who did own their mother tongue. He further stated that "If, however, the linguistic States were to be created as had been created in other parts of the country, there was no justification for denying the Punjabi Suba to the Punjabi-speaking people."



(The whole family headed by the widow courted arrest on 26/6/60. Thousands of such families participated in movement).

SANT FATEH SINGH TO GO ON FAST; MASTER TO SUE THE GOVERNOR SHRI N. V. GADGIL.

Finding that the peaceful, constitutional, and non-violent agitation was carrying no weight with the govt. Sant Fateh Singh thought of the last and the only remedy available to him viz. of going to the fast unto death.

On 29/10/60, Sant wrote to the Prime Minister narrating the whole background as to why he was constrained to keep the fast unto death. In the letter, Sant dwelt at length as to how the constitutional demand was sidetracked for no cogent reasons and that its rejection amounted to a stepmotherly treatment against the Punjabis. The repression let loose by the callous and stone-hearted administration of the Pb. Govt. on the peaceful and non-violent *Satyagrahis* was also spot-lighted. The letter remained unacknowledged. In those days, the Govt. gave a currency to the rumour that Sant had to go on fast on Master's refusal to undertake the fast unto death. When Master ji came to know about it, he sent the letter to S. Gujral for filing a case against the Governor, and the letter written from Dharamsala sub-jail reads: "My dear Gujral Ji, I have read the speech of the Punjab Governor delivered by him in the meeting of the Governors at Delhi held on 9th November. I cannot comment upon any other thing mentioned in the speech, but there is a most defamatory attack upon my person. The Governor has concocted a false story or somebody else has concocted the story and put it in his ears. He says that Sant Fateh Singh Ji has made up his mind to fast to death upon my refusal to fast. This is utterly baseless, false, defamatory and mischievous. Will you immediately file a libel suit against the Governor. If notice is not absolutely necessary, file the suit immediately. If notice is necessary, kindly give notice to the governor. This speech is not the Governor's function. He has made this attack upon me in his personal capacity. If it is advisable or preferable to file this suit at Delhi, Kindly request Bakhshi Gurcharan Singh Ji, Advocate, to file this suit.

I was about to go on fast when I read in the Press that Sant Fateh Singh Ji had declared his fast. So I changed my mind.

I have written to the Chief Justice complaining of the obstacles put in my and my lawyers' way by the Government in obtaining legal help, advice and help in time. I am not enclosing a copy of the complaint herewith lest this letter be delayed. I hope the Chief Justice will press the Government to remove the obstacles and delays caused in getting prompt permission by my lawyers for interviews with me. When is S. Amar Singh coming? He he been given permission or it is being put off on one excuse or the other. Will you see me immediately?

15-11-1960

Sd/- TARA SINGH
(Master)"

(Since the Governor informed Gujral about the confidential nature of the Governors' meeting, therefore, the matter was not pursued further.)

Sant Fateh Singh addressed the 2nd letter to Pt. Nehru that the former would start his fast from 18/12/60. The letter concluded : "...In view of the happenings and acts of aggression and lawlessness committed by the Government in opposing the constitutional and peaceful demand of Punjabi Suba movement, I feel convinced that time has come when my country's faith in democratic and constitutional ways should be saved from being shaken and that the tide of dictatorial methods of governing the country should be stemmed by self-immolation. It is the dictate of my conscience that following the methods of Great Gurus, I should lay down my life for the noble cause..."

Mr. Jai Parkash Narain met Master Ji at Dharamsala and made a hectic but unsuccessful bid to defuse the crisis.

Sant went to the fast on 18/12/60, at 9.00 A. M. During his speech, he wanted the Sikhs to be peaceful and to remain loyal to the country as "evrey particle of the country is ours, and its loss is our loss."A 7-man Committee consisting of Harcharan Singh Hudiara (convener) Satbir Singh, Ajit Singh Bala, Pritam Singh Shrihan Gurdial Singh (Bawa), Jiwan Singh Umranangal and Jagir Singh was appointed to run, control and supervise the agitation. It was also announced that after Sant's fast, Umranangal, Shrihan, Bhan Singh (Jathedar), Darshan Singh, Hukam Singh and Sants Arjan Singh, Ram Singh, Gurdial Singh, Jai Singh and Amar Singh would keep the fast unto death, Pt. Nehru sent a message on 20/12/60, to the new Panches who met at Chandigarh stating *inter alia* that Punjabi language was the main language of Pb. and it should be promoted in every possible way.

The situation was critical. The Sikhs' blood was boiling with rage and their patience was wearing thin. At that critical hour, Baldev Singh despite his being seriously ill and being a staunch Congress man could not resist attacking Kairon. On 18/12, he categorically stated that the person solely responsible for the present difficult situation was Kairon, who did not implement the Regional Formula in the right perspective. However, it did not prick the conscience of either Kairon or of the Central Govt. as both of them were testing the endurance and the patience of the Sikhs. Giani Kartar Singh and Rarewala were too quick to allow Kairon to rebut Baldev Singh accusation; they inflicted the 'Brutu's dagger blow' by dubbing Baldev Singh's statement : "A sick statement from a sick man." On 30/12/60, J. P. Narain stated in a Press release that Master be released unconditionally so that Sant's life could be saved. He suggested a round-table conference to sort out the differences and re-

quested that P. M. should appeal to Sant to break the fast. On 30/12, Nehru appealed to Sant to give up the fast and an invitation for talks in Delhi was extended, but the Akali Dal turned down the same.

MASTER TARA SINGH'S RELEASE

More than 50000 Akali Satyagrahis were in the Jail and the Govt. strongly desired to release the Akali prisoners on one excuse or the other. After the Bhatinda firing, "Apology technique" did not click. On the other hand, the public opinion was going steadily but surely against the Congress. In a very big gathering at Manji Sahib at Amritsar, Dr. M.S.



Non Sikhs including Anney and Kitchlu also extended great support to the Punjabi Suba demand in a big convention at Amritsar. L to R : H. S. Hudiara, Dr. M. S. Aney, Bhag Singh Ankhi. Dr. S. D. Kitchlu and Bharpur Singh (Prof.)

Aney, M. P., Dr. Sarfud Din Kitchlew, Dr. Kali Charan Sharma, former Mahan Front Leader, Mr. Mani Ram Bagri, P. S. P. M. L. A., Mr. Surinder Nath Khosla, former M. L. A., and Mr. Madan Lal Chairman of Punjab Linguistic Conference made fiery speeches in favour of Punjabi-speaking State. On 2/1/61, the Communist Party of India whole-heartedly supported Akalis' demand and wanted the removal of discrimination.

Giani Kartar Singh and S. Kairon put their heads together and thought of the proposal to release Master Ji forthwith as his release was

expected to be a turning point on the Akali agitation. They planned that if Sant was persuaded to break the fast by Master after his release, the latter's position would be the worst and if Sant was allowed to die, Master was again sure to invite his political annihilation, consequently, Master was released from Yol Camp in Dharamsala Jail on 4/1/61, at 9.15 p.m. While releasing Master unconditionally, Kairon stated to the press that the decision to release Master Tara Singh "flows from and is because of the statement made by the Prime Minister requesting Sant Fateh Singh to give up the fast unto death...The Government believes that the release of Master Tara Singh will give the Akali Dal and Sant Fateh Singh an opportunity to consider this request."

As soon as Masterji reached Amritsar, he went straight to the cottage near the Golden Temple where Santji was fasting. Masterji summoned the meeting of the Akali Dal's Working Committee on



(Master Tara Singh meeting the fasting leader Sant Fateh Singh on Januury 5, 1961. In the picture, Bharpur Singh, Satbir Singh, Santji, Masterji, Jagir Singh, Pritam Singh Shrihan and H. S. Hudiara are seen).

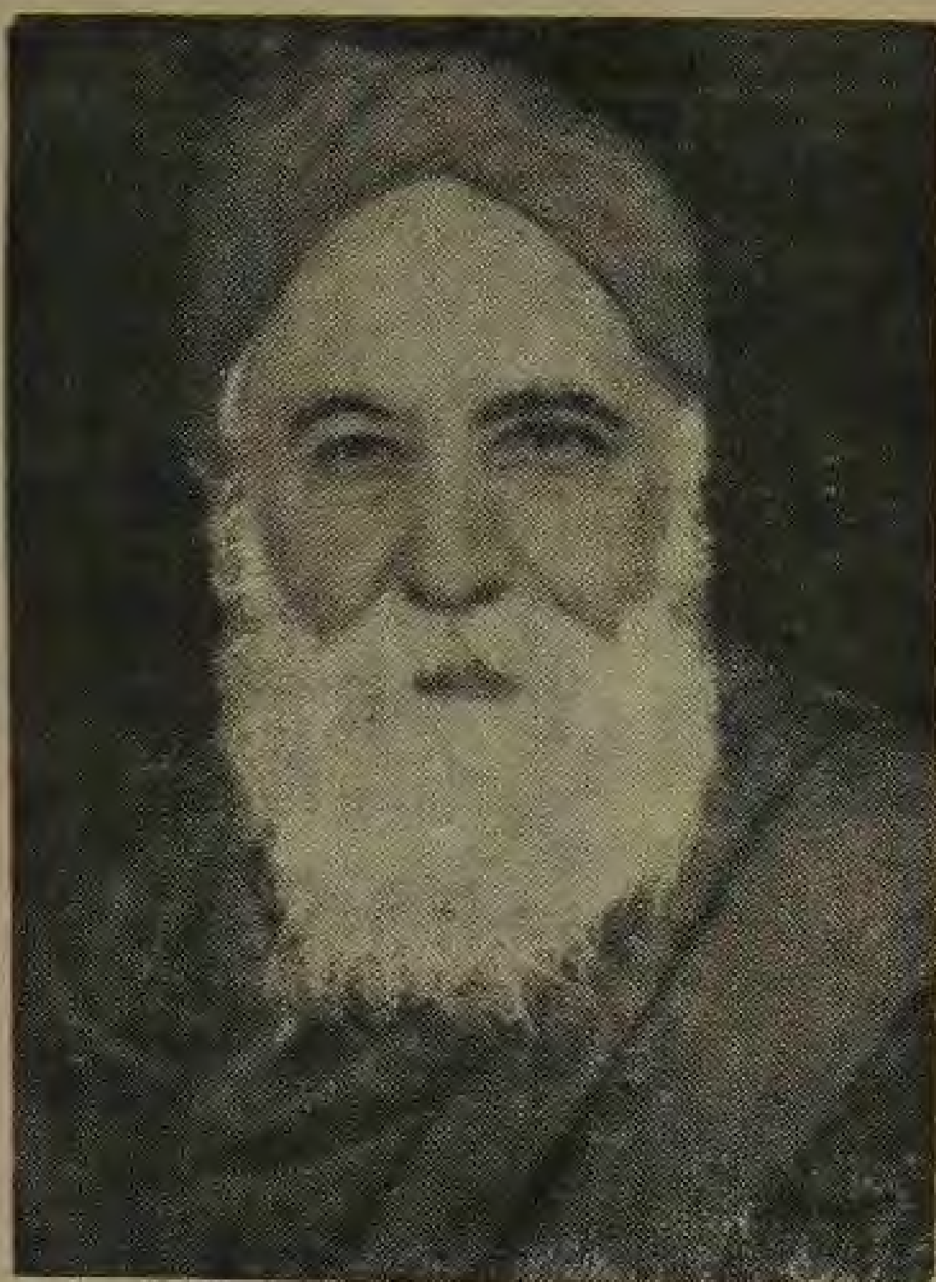
5/1/61. It was resolved *inter alia* : "...The statement of the Prime Minister dated 31st December, 1960, that he had sent his request to Sant Fateh Singh to come and convince him of the justness of the demand of Punjabi Suba before resorting to fast and also the telegram of the Prime

Minister to Sant Fateh Singh from Bhavanagar, has also been dispassionately considered by the Working Committee. The Working Committee is of the view that though more effective methods to communicate the Prime Minister's request for opening talks on the question of Punjabi Suba should have been adopted to avoid later unhappy development, yet it is of the view, that the offer of negotiations and talks on the question of the unilingual Punjabi State made by the Prime Minister, should be considered in the hope that an honest effort will be made by the Government of India to understand and concede the demand made by the Shiromani Akali Dal on its merits. Before, however, some concrete steps can be taken in response to the gesture of the Prime Minister, the restoration of normal conditions, civil liberties, freedom of speech and movement in the Punjab and Delhi are necessary. Sant Fateh Singh's condition, however, is very serious and causing grave concern, not admitting of any delay. Hence the Working Committee considers that an urgent telegraphic reply be sent to the telegram of Prime Minister on the above mentioned lines and his reply be considered in the Working Committee meeting tomorrow at 10 A.M., when the entire situation will be considered in the light of the relevant circumstances." It can be safely concluded that Master wanted Sant to continue with fast but Jiwan Singh Umranangal, Seth Ram Nath and Hudiara including Sarup Singh and Satbir Singh convinced Master that every effort be made to save Sant's life otherwise the Sikh community was sure to curse them for not having saved him. On 5/1, Sant was completing his 19th day of the fast and his health was causing great anxiety. The future events will show how Master was keen to save Sant's life. Pt. Nehru was at Bhavanagar, therefore, Master decided to talk to him personally for clinching the whole matter once for all. On 5/1/1961, at about 11.55 P.M. Master along with his daughter, son and Gujral left for Delhi in the car enroute to Bhavanagar. Gurnam Singh, Lachhman Singh Gill, Hargurnad Singh also left for Delhi in different cars, and all of them reached Delhi the next day at 5 A.M.

MASTER TARA SINGH DIRECTED THE WHOLE AEROPLANE TO BE CHARTERED.

S. Harbans Singh Gujral made an enquiry from the Indian Air Lines as to whether 2 seats were available in the aeroplane scheduled to leave Delhi for Bhavanagar in the morning flight, and the reply was that only one person could go by the plane. Sant by that time had developed burning, sulking and complete restlessness all over his body. Key tone bodies also started coming into his urine bringing him into the zone of

S. Harbans Singh Gujral,





S. Gopal Singh Quami. He was one of the Presidents of Akali Dal. He was a humorist and satirist of top grade. In one of his speeches, he said, "We go to the Pb. Govt. for Justice, it removes the turbans. We then go the Central Govt., it removes our shirts."

deep concern. Master was extremely anxious to reach Bhavanagar at the earliest so that Sant's life could be saved. Because of the deteriorating and the alarming health of Sant, Master was racing against time, therefore, he directed Gujral to charter another aeroplane and it was done so after paying Rs. 8000/- to the Airlines. Lachhman Singh Gill, Hargurnad Singh, and a few other Akali leaders also accompanied Master Ji to Bhavanagar.

MASTER TARA SINGH AT BHAVANAGAR.

Master Ji and other Akali leaders reached Bhavnagar at about 7.30 P.M. on 6/1/61. They found the govt. officials already present at the Air Port to receive them. The govt. came to know through the press that Master was flying to Bhavanagar for seeing the P.M. Because of the news, Pt. Nehru cancelled his evening address and other engagements, and chose to deliver his speech in the morning session. Pt. G.B. Pant, the Home Minister, had also cancelled his return journey to Delhi so that he could participate in the discussions. Harcharan Singh, a former minister, and Ram Nath Seth had already reached Bhavanagar. After reaching the Rest House, Gujral telephoned the Private Secretary to Pt. Nehru for the grant of interview and he replied that they could come at-once as the P.M. and the Home Minister were waiting for Master ji.

MASTER ADDRESSED NEHRU AS 'AURANGZEB'.

The meeting started at about 8 P.M. and continued for more than 3 hours. According to Gujral, Master referred to the various Sikh grievances including the denial of Punjabi Suba to them. He further told Nehru that he had come to extend the hand of friendship and the same be grasped and Sant be requested to break the fast. Nehru replied that he could look into the Sikh grievances sympathetically but he won't ask Sant to end the fast as he reached the decision of resorting to fast unilaterally, and that proved to be the breaking point of the negotiations. After making extensive and useful discussions, both the leaders started exchanging heated arguments, and the meeting came to an abrupt end when Master gave fist blow on the conference table and loudly said, "Well, the Prime Minister, we are leaving as you seem to be inclined to play the role of Aurangzeb. I am determined to do my humble as the devoted Sikh of Guru Tegh Bahadur." Panditji tried his best to pacify Masterji but of no avail.

Master Ji, according to Gujral, did not take his meals nor could he sleep that night. He was obviously pained to see the attitude of the P.M. Master is reported to have said that he, being the representative of the Sikhs, deserved a better response Master decided that in no case Sant should break fast and after his death, he was to follow him. He summoned the press and made his decision known. That led Nehru to rethink the whole matter afresh. On January 8, 1961, the Prime Minister made a speech to the effect that there was no ground for Sant Fateh Singh to continue the fast, that Punjab State was, broadly spepking, a Punjabi Suba with Punjabi as the dominant language, that some persons of the Punjab spoke Hindi but essentially Punjabi was the dominant language, and that it should be encouraged in every way. He further said, "Now I add one word to this, because Master Tara Singh mentioned it to me about Sant Fateh Singh's having taken an oath and he should not be asked to break it. I do not like asking any person to break a solemn oath, but I am convinced that what I have said in my Delhi speech, and what I am stating today, and the facts that I have placed before the country with regard to the Punjabi language, clearly meet the substance of what Sant Fateh Singh has said. Oaths are not taken with regard to some legal aspect or statutory ways of looking at things, but about the substance of the things. And, therefore, what I have stated should be quite enough for Sant Fateh Singh to meet this difficulty, and give up his fast."

On January 8, 1961, Sant told the Akali leaders at Amritsar, that he could break his fast if Master said so. When the P.M. made the speech

at Delhi on 8/1, conceding the fact of Punjab's being a uni-lingual State. Master, who was in Delhi at that time, opined that the Prime Minister's statement was good enough for asking Sant to end his fast.

GUJRAL LEFT DELHI FOR CHANDIGARH IN DISGUST.

Gujral tried to convince Master that he should not request Sant to end the fast unless the Working Committee of the Akali Dal passed a resolution to that effect, but Master ignored the suggestion and Gujral left Delhi for Chandigarh in disgust. Master conveyed his reaction : "I am satisfied with to-day's speech of the Prime Minister at Sardar Nagar. Request to break your fast. It fulfills the requirements of vow." Master's request was also fortified with the command of five Piaras : Gianis Chet Singh, Kirpal Singh, Fauja Singh, Sardars Bakhshish Singh and Mohan Singh, who called upon Sant to break the fast as they were satisfied that the substance of the pledge had been conceded.

SANT BREAKS THE FAST.

On January 9, 1961, Sant ji ended 22—day fast at 8.30 A.M. in the presence of tens of thousands of people. At that time, H.S. Hudiara made the main speech saying *inter alia* that Pt. Nehru was to be thanked for the gesture of good-will, that Sikhs' interests were safe in his hands, that the Pb. Govt. had lifted all restrictions relating to Punjabi Suba Agitation, that amnesty had been granted to the Akali prisoners, that the agitation would shift from agitational approach to persuasive and constitutional means, and that the agitation would come to an end when Master reached Amritsar on January 11, 1961.

Some people, however, started the whispering campaign that the fast should not have been broken when the pledge was not fulfilled. Unfortunately, the Akalis could not succeed in getting the statutory recognition about the Punjab being the Punjabi—speaking State, and about Punjabi in Gurmukhi script being the State language for the entire State. "The Bhavanagar declaration by the Prime Minister unfortunately was not utilised to its advantage by the Akali Dal, and a Himalayan blunder was committed by Master Tara Singh when, soon after, at a press conference at his house, he said, "The battle for attainment of Punjabi Suba would continue. The suspension of the struggle is only a truce or cease-fire to create a good atmosphere for talks. This statement gave an impression to the Sikh masses in general that the battle for the Punjabi Suba had been lost, and the pledge for it had been broken at the instance of Master Tara Singh."(45)

MASTER'S LEADERSHIP ON THE WANE

On the night of 11/1/61, Master was hooted down by the crowd at a *Dewan* at Manji Sahib in Amritsar, and there was an exchange of arguments and then of blows between his supporters and opponents. On 13/1, he had to abruptly end his speech at Muktsar on the occasion of Maghi fair when the whole of audience (about 4000 people) stood up and refused to listen to him. The disenchantment with Master's leadership was so pronounced and wide-spread that even in Patiala, Master's strong-hold, his effigy was burnt. The Sikh youth wanted Master's leadership to be replaced by Sant's leadership. The main grievance was as to why Master went to Bhavanagar without getting any invitation from the Prime Minister. His asking Sant to break the fast was also disapproved of especially when the latter's vow remained unfulfilled.

The Working Committee of the Akali Dal met at Amritsar for more than 4 hours on 16/1, with Master in the Chair. Through one resolution, the Dal reposed full confidence in Master's leadership, and appreciated his wisdom in having the fast broken. It was resolved : "...in order to achieve the earliest settlement of this problem, we would like discussions as promised by the Prime Minister, to be held as early as possible, so that all the aspects of the Punjabi Suba problem are fully examined and a satisfactory agreement reached..." Through another resolution, the repression and injustice let loose against the non-violent Sikhs during the agitation period was condemned.

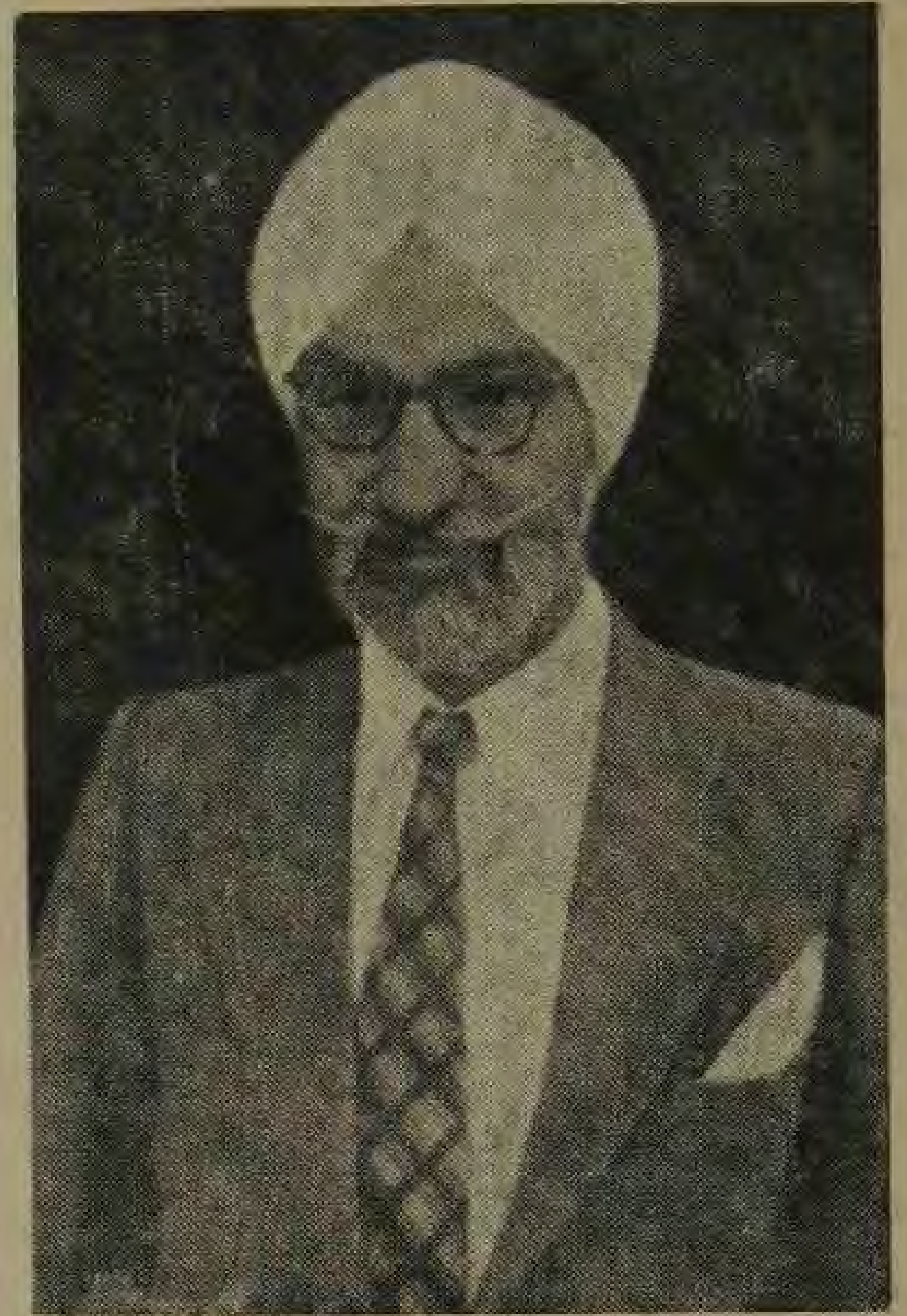
Masterji's contention that the battle for Punjabi Suba was yet to conclude coupled with the statement of Kairon made at the press conference on 23/1/61, about the Akali movement having failed was pressed into service by the opposition to vocalise that Master completely failed in his mission.

FIRST MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND SANT

On 23/1/61, Sant ji got a personal letter from the P. M. inviting him for the meeting at Delhi on 8/2. The Working Committee of the Dal met on 5/2, and the members discussed the draft of the memorandum containing Akali Dal's demand for the bifurcation of the State on the linguistic basis. It was resolved that memorandum be presented to the P. M. when Sant met him at Delhi.

On February 8, 1961, Sant Fateh Singh accompanied by Harbans Singh Gujral and Gurbux Singh Advocates met the P. M. In the beginn-

ing, the P. M. and Sant talked all alone, however, after 15 minutes, Gujral and Gurbux Singh were also invited to participate in the discussions. Pandit Nehru enumerated the difficulties standing in his way for conceding the demand of Punjabi-speaking State. The main difficulty, he mentioned was that the Hindus, whose numerical strength was equal to the Sikhs, were opposed to the demand. Soon after the talks were over, Sant went to Gurdwara Raqab Ganj and informed Master about the gist of the talks. Sant seemed to be happy as was quite clear from his speech delivered in the evening at a reception : "I had a very free and frank talk with the P. M. this morning. We discussed a number of matters and the remaining things will be discussed in the next meeting. We should not expect a quick decision from the Govt. or from the P. M. as big people have bigger problems. The P. M. has to keep in view and consider the interests of the other communities before taking this decision. When some one made repeated enquiries as to when the demand would be met, Sant retorted, "Punjabi Suba is after all not an apple which the Prime Minister could offer in the plate." The Sikhs were hopeful that some satisfactory solution would come out shortly.



S. Gurbux Singh Advocate Gurdaspur.

SECOND MEETING BETWEEN PANDIT NEHRU AND SANT

On March 1, 61, Sant Fateh Singh met Pandit Nehru for the 2nd time. Sant was again accompanied by Harbans Singh Gujral and Gurbux Singh Advocates. The talks continued for 75 minutes. At the outset, Pandit Nehru and Sant Fateh Singh talked all alone for 30 minutes, later on Gujral and Gurbux Singh were also invited to join the deliberations. 18—paged closely typed memorandum was handed over to the P. M. The Akali leaders alluded to the difficulties which were pointed out by Pt. Nehru during the first meeting. Sant further told the P. M. that inspite of the assurances, the Akali prisoners had not been released. After the meeting was over, Sant straightened to Gurdwara Rakab Ganj, where he briefed Master about the talks.

The memorandum dealt with the historical background of the

demand for the bifurcation of the States on the linguistic principle. In that connection, references were made to the letter written by Sir Herbert Risley, (Home Secretary to Government of India) to the Government of Bengal, dated 3rd December, 1903, the Partition Resolution of 1905, the Montague-Chelmsford Report 1918, and the observations contained in the Indian Statutory Commission constituted in 1930. The approach of the Indian National Congress to the question of formation of linguistic States was also spot-lighted. The facts and figures were elaborately furnished to prove the economic viability of the proposed Punjabi speaking State. Since the talks were inconclusive, it was decided to thrash-out the whole matter in the third meeting.

ALLEGATIONS BY KAIRON AND DARBARA SINGH AGAINST MASTER.

In order to win the favour of the element, hostile to the demand of Punjabi Suba, and to emerge as the "nationalist champions" Kairon and Darbara Singh invented a gimmic and alleged, of course, in the most malicious, sadestic and irresponsible way that Master had received assurances from the Pakistan President to train gureillas for the struggle of Punjabi Suba. The C.M. alleged that Master was in conspiracy with Pakistan. The above allegations were rightly and strongly denied by Master who was provoked to retort that the above statements were inspired by Prime Minister. In a statement issued on 11/5/61, Master said, "Sant Fateh Singh and those who accompanied him told me that during their talks with the Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru had said that he was not prepared to hand over Punjab to irresponsible persons like Master Tara Singh. From this, it would appear that a lack of confidence was the main hurdle in the way of meeting the demand for Punjabi-speaking State. I, therefore, offer to retire completely from public life and leave my beloved country for ever." Master wrote 2 letters : one on 31/1, and the 2nd on 22/2/61, to Pt. Nehru demanding an impartial enquiry but the letters remained unacknowledged. The C.M. and the Congress Chief never wanted the talks to succeed and they opposed tooth and nail the demand for Punjabi Suba with more fury than was the case with the Hindu section opposed to the demand. Sant left Amritsar for Delhi on 11/5, for further talks with Pt. Nehru.

THIRD MEETING BETWEEN THE P.M. & SANT

On May 12, 1961, Sant Fateh Singh along with S. Harbans Singh Gujral and S. Gurbux Singh Advocates met the P.M. for 2½ hours at Delhi. When the 3 Akali leaders reached the residence of P.M. who was

yet to join them in the discussions, Gujral found the Hindustan Times lying on the table. It contained the news that in no case, the demand for Punjabi Suba would be conceded. The moment Panditji entered the room, Gujral questioned the P.M. as to whether he was serious about the talks or it was altogether a farce? On being asked to elaborate the remarks, Gujral showed the news item. By that time, Mrs. Indira Gandhi had also appeared in the room. Panditji asked her as to who had given the statement. Mrs. Indira Gandhi replied that it was done by Morarji Bhai. The Prime Minister remarked that it was really unfortunate.*

In that meeting, the P.M. did not mince words, and very frankly told Sant that in no case, the demand for the bifurcation of the State could be accepted as Hindus were bitterly opposed. He said that the creation of Punjabi-speaking State was neither in the interest of Punjab nor of the Country, however, he expressed his readiness to do everything for the development of Punjabi language and to get the other Sikh grievances—if any—redressed. After the meeting, Sant came straight to Gurdwara Rakab Ganj, where he talked to Master. On being contacted, Master told the press that the situation was critical. Sant held a press conference, and announced that he might resort to a fast-unto death for the achievement of Punjabi-speaking State. He lamented that "reasons and logic could carry no weight with the govt. which was intoxicated with power and was proud of its police and force." He further amplified that a deaf ear was turned to their feeble voice and that there could be little hope of justice unless a supreme sacrifice was made particularly when a 'stone-hearted man' had not been moved by the arrests of 57129 persons, and the deaths of about a dozen of young men. Sant decried that the peaceful and non-violent agitation of as many as eight months and the fast of 23 days was of no significance and importance to the P.M. On the same day, the Akali Dal's Working Committee unanimously passed a resolution demanding high-level enquiry into the allegations made by the C.M. and the Congress Chief against Master. The resolution said that the allegations were false and malicious, and were part of govt's efforts to find every possible excuse for refusing to create Punjabi Suba. On 13/5, Master stated in Delhi that the struggle for Punjabi Suba would continue and there would be no further talks between the Akali leaders and Pt. Nehru.

THE DEVELOPMENTS CULMINATING INTO THE FAST UNTO DEATH BY MASTER TARA SINGH

On May 16, 1961, Masterji along with S. Bakhshish Singh met Mr.

*Interview with S. Harbans Singh Gujral.

Jai Parkash Narain at Nabha, and wanted that the latter should persuade the Congress leaders to get the enquiry done into the charge made by S. Kairon and S. Darbara Singh. Master and Sant were thoroughly convinced that unless some extreme step was taken, the demand for Punjabi Suba was not likely to be conceded. Therefore, the two leaders requested the Working Committee of the Akali Dal, which met on 17/5/61, at Akal Takhat Sahib, to permit either of the two to go on fast-unto death so that the Congress Govt. could do conscience—searching. The meeting was attended by 25 members of the Working Committee. Gurnam Singh,



Working Committee of the Akali Dal held its meeting at the II floor of Akal Takhat on May 17, 1961. Some of the members are seen taking refreshments after the meeting came to end. L. to R: S Atma Singh, S. Gurnam Singh, Ch. Kartar Singh, S Gurbux Singh, Adv. & S. Surjit Singh Minhas (special invitee being the President of AISSF).

Udham Singh Nagoke, Gurbux Singh, Amar Singh Ambalvi, H. S. Gujral and Ch. Kartar Singh were the special invitees. The consensus was not to take the drastic step unless the matter was decided by the members of the Dal's general body. Therefore, it was decided to summon the meeting for 28/5, when the final strategy was to be chalked out. Special invitations were sent to the V. I. Ps. for the above meeting. The Working Committee met on 27/5, and considered Master's offer of fast-unto death.

8—man Committee was formed to ponder over the whole matter so that it could advise the general body which was to meet the next day. On 28/5, a big convention was held where Dr. S. D. Kitchlu, Seth Ram Nath former Chairman of Punjabi Regional Committee, S. Harbhajan Singh, leader of Punjab Parja Socialist Party, Mr. K. G. Jodh, General Secretary of All India Linguistic State Conference, Mr. Kali Charan Sharma, Mr. Sunder Lal, President of All India Peace Council, S. Harcharan Singh, Ex. Pepsu Minister, S. Udham Singh Nagoke, the then President of Swatantra Party, Ch. Kartar Singh, S. Gurbachan Singh Bajwa and other leaders attended. The general body approved of Master's decision to go on fast w.e.f. 15/8. Very fiery speeches were made, and the speakers brought one point home that the Congress Govt. was highly unjust towards the genuine cause of the Punjabi-speaking people, that the arrests of thousands of people did not move the Govt. and that Pt. Nehru suspected the Sikh Community as a traitor. The resolution was proposed and seconded by Sant and Gurnam Singh respectively. Master declared that during his life time, he could not bear the insult being done to the Sikhs and they could not be allowed to be treated as inferior citizens. It was resolved : "Ever since the Congress leaders came to supreme power in this country, they have dealt with and treated the Sikhs as if they were alien people under the heels of a conquering race, and assumed colonial power invested with the mission of subjugating and absorbing others ; and it is from this basic attitude that the gross discrimination against, and sustained suppression of, the Sikh individuals and masses has proceeded in post-partition India...Now, however, the Sikhs after a summary and unilateral termination of the Sant Fateh Singh-Nehru talks, are once again confronted with the painful truth that the ruling elite of India refuses to alter its fundamental attitude towards the Sikhs ; sees no use in placing any faith in the Sikhs ; and continues to base its tactics on the twin wheels of mendacious propaganda, brute force, and under these circumstances, the Sikhs clearly recognise that the alternative before them is either to make a supreme sacrifice, which may ensure them an honourable place and existence in their country or to submit and perish.

For these reasons, it is resolved that Master Tara Singh be allowed to follow the dictates of his conscience in the matter and the manner of undertaking the fast unto death at a proper time, and this process of individual self-immolation to continue till such time that the conscience of Indian citizens in particular, and the world in general, is aroused, so as to compel the present ruling elite to abandon its basic, undemocratic and

anti-Sikh policies, or their position of unbridled power, and concede the just and legitimate demand of a unilingual Punjabi-speaking State.

May God and the spirit of the Guru guide us in the coming struggle of life and death."

Master in a separate statement said "I do not want to die, but while living, I do not want to see the Sikh Panth insulted and the Sikhs treated as inferior to other Communities. I shall begin my fast unto death from August 15, and continue it till the demand for the Punjabi Suba is conceded."

Pt. Nehru sent the reply to Master's letter dated 31/5/61, and it was received by Masterji on 4/6 The tone was conciliatory in nature. The contents of the letter were published in the press on 6/6. Pt. Nehru categorically denied about his having addressed the Sikhs as the enemies of the Country or that he had ever said "*Kya Main Taqat Dushmanon Ke Hath Men De Duon* ?" (How can I entrust the power into the hands of the enemies ?) to Sant during his talks with him. The Pb. Govt. banned the publication of any material about the Punjabi language controversy or any fact concerning the agitation. The Akali papers, *Parbhat* and *Jathedar* were banned. On 8/6, 50 prominent Akalis including Atma Singh, (leader of Panthic group in The Assembly Party) and Bakhshish Singh (Master's close relative) were arrested under the Security Proceedings. Masterji counselled the Sikhs not to court arrest as the mass agitation was to be substituted by the individual martyrdom as it was better for one to suffer than the whole nation to grieve.

On 16/6, Masterji sent a letter to President and Vice-President of India about the unwarranted arrests of the Sikhs. Master and Sant got replies from Nehru where the allegations were refuted. Master was disappointed at Nehru's letter and he alleged that the P.M. tried to create a cleavage between him and Sant. The Dal's Working Committee meeting was held on 27/6/61, where the aforesaid letters were placed for discussion. A resolution was passed condemning the arrests; and an appeal was made to the majority community to keep the minority contented and happy. The demand of Punjabi Suba was reiterated, and the Pb. Govt.'s policy was called as highly repressive. Addressing a Panthic Conference on 1/7, Hudiara, the then Vice President of the Akali Dal, warned the govt. with the words: "To save the Sikh Community from countless atrocities and to prick the conscience of the 'National Government' Master Tara Singh will go on fast-unto death on August 15, I can



S. Baldev Singh. He was born at Dumana (Distt. Rupar) on 11-7-1902. Large-hearted Baldev Singh died of heart attack on 29-6-61, at the age of 59 years. The developments leading to Master Tara Singh's fast broke S. Baldev Singh's heart and hastened his death. Referring to his demise, Master stated, "With the death of S. Baldev Singh, I have lost my right hand." In 1937, he was elected to the Pb. Assembly on Akali ticket and became the leader of Panthic Akali Party. He, the architect of 'Sikander Baldev Pact' (1942) and then Defence Minister fell out of Pt. Nehru's favour in 1957 as S. Kairon succeeded in creating a cleavage between Pt. Nehru and S. Baldev Singh. Kairon brought the points home to Nehru that Baldev Singh was the Chief Adviser and financer to Master. The Pb. politics revolved around him till he was cut down to size by Kairon. As the law student in 1959, the Author had the privilege to meet S. Baldev Singh frequently. He was not only obliging, generous, soft-spoken but also hospitable. The picture shows Master, Baldev Singh, Jogindera Singh with Cripps on 31-3-1942.

guess that after Master Tara Singh and Sant Fateh Singh, the new leaders might give a call for an independent Sikh State instead of Punjabi Suba."

On 1/7, the entry of '*Jathedar*' a Daily Punjabi Newspaper being

published from Delhi was banned in Punjab. Since hot speeches were being made that after the death of Master, the Sikhs would be constrained to demand an independent Sikh State, Master condemned such speeches and emphatically stated in his written statement that it was sheer madness to demand the Sikh State. On 12/7, Master stated in the press conference that if there was a plebiscite in the Punjabi-speaking area, regarding the Punjabi Suba demand, he would welcome it.

CONGRESS LEADERS' REACTION TO THE PROPOSED FAST.

Almost all the Congress leaders, including Giani Kartar Singh, were trying to surpass one another in condemning Master, the Punjabi Suba and the proposed fast. Kairon continued to issue one statement after the other showing his determination to face and crush the Akali agitation with full vehemence. Sarup Singh, who was removed from Akali Dal about 2 months back, stated on 21/7, that by keeping the fast, Master was not adopting a helpful attitude. The former leader of the Panthic Party in Punjab Assembly found the P. M's. attitude more helpful, and according to him, the fast was to confound the main issue. Paying compliments to Sant, he stated that under Sant's stewardship, the demand of Punjabi Suba stood rationalised as it was kept confined to the language problem only, but Master's fast would completely undo the same. On 25/7, Kairon stated that fast amounted to a suicide and he condemned the action of Akali Dal in allowing the fast to be kept in the precincts of Darbar Sahib. Hukam Singh, the then Deputy Speaker, did not lag behind. He also issued the statement on 2/8, stating: "I and so many friends have misgivings that the fast will be detrimental to the community harmful to the country and directly opposed to the basic beliefs which are so sacred to us." The Congress leaders and the Pb. Govt. were adopting the old and the usual strategy of getting the statements issued by the Hindu and handy-Sikh leaders in condemning the Punjabi Suba demand and Master's fast. Gian Singh Rarewala wanted a greater Punjab including Himachal Pradesh as a counter to Master's fast.

MASTER TARA SINGH KEEPS FAST UNTO DEATH

On August 3/61, Sant Fateh Singh issued a secret circular to all the members of the Dal's Working Committee inviting their views as to how the life of Master could be saved. On the other hand, Kairon girded up his loins to crush the agitation and to prove to the hilt that he was a master politician and a skilled strategist. On 4/8, he got the blanket order issued under the Pb. Special Powers (Press) Act, 56, banning all the news pertaining to the Punjabi Suba, the proposed fast and the

language issues. (However, the ban was withdrawn on 18/8/61, when the Editors of the Newspapers agreed to co-operate in with-holding the inflamatory news and views). Pt. Nehru wrote a letter on 10/8, appealing Master not to keep the fast. On 11/8, S. Kairon offered to resign if Master left politics. Mr. Rajgopalachari, the Swatantra Party Leader, appealed to Masterji to reconsider his decision about the fast. He opined that if at all, the fast was to be kept, it must be for a particular period. On 15/8/1961, Master's "sense of history compelled him to launch on a fast to death from 15 August, 1961. He had chosen Independence Day to drive home his charge that the Sikhs were being discriminated against in free India. The venue of the fast was one of the rooms in the Golden Temple complex." (46). On 21/8, Sant, on behalf of the Working Committee, replied to Nehru's letter dated 10/8, suggesting that the mutual talks based on the Punjabi Suba would be an ideal solution.

Pt. Nehru and the Sant talked to each other on the 24th and the 25th August, 1961, but they proved abortive. Gurnam Singh, who accompanied Sant, announced on 25/8, that the talks had failed. The door of negotiatons was closed with Nehru's statements made in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on 28/8 and 30/8/1961, respectively rejecting the demand for Punjabi-Suba. The debate on the fast and the Punjabi Suba was initiated because of the motion tabled by 13 Congress members of the Lok Sabha. Hukam Singh opposed the Punjabi Suba with the words : "Punjabi Suba...I had been on the floor of the house advocating this cause. Many a time, I stood and pleaded for it. But there are other reasons that out-weigh it at this moment. I consider, Hindu-Sikh harmony is more important than getting this demand conceded at this moment. If by proceeding in this manner, we create tension, and a permanent gulf between the Hindus and Sikhs, I would rather not have the Punjabi Suba at this moment. Communal harmony between the Hindus and the Sikhs is more dear to me than any demand for the linguistic State. If once that is given and the chances for that get remote, certainly I would not go in for that demand." (Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. XXII, p. 5635). At the time of debate in the parliament, Ajit Singh Sarhadi kept mum. On page 356 of his book 'Punjabi Suba', he assigned the reason for his non-participation in the debate : "I was surprised when I was informed by the Speaker on the morning of August 29, 1961, through a messenger that the Congress Party through its Chief whip, the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, had sent four names as their speakers in the debate...On my request to the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs for being allowed to speak as an additional speaker,

explaining to him that I was to speak on the lines of the P. M's announcement and declaration, I was astounded when I was told that I could not be allowed to speak, because, like Maulana Azad, I might qualify my opposition to bifurcation with 'ifs' and 'buts'..."

MASTER TARA SINGH BREAKS FAST

"Master Tara Singh saved his life but killed his political career and dealt a grievous blow to the cause of the Sikh state."

(Khushwant Singh)

On August 30, 1961, the Working Committee of the Akali Dal met and resolved *inter alia* : "...we have studied Mr. Nehru's speech in the Parliament and note with extreme regret that a person of Mr Nehru's level has become a source of positive incitement against this small minority .. Specifying the highest principle of secularism, Mr. Nehru has thrown all principles of democratic conventions to the winds right in his own country..." (See Tribune dt. 31/8/61) On 31/8, Mr. Rajgopalachari extended his support by issuing the statement: "...No one will be gladder than I, if he breaks the fast. His demand should not be misconstrued or confused, but should be dealt with justly That Sikhs will happen to be in the majority, if the Punjabi language is recognised in certain areas and given identical treatment, should not be a reason to deny its equal treatment. I do earnestly hope that Prime Minister will stand for fair and equal treatement..." Mr. Jai Prakash Naraian also met Master Ji on 1/9, and pursuaded him, of-course, in vain, to break the fast. After the meeting, Master stated that he had once suggested the names of Rajgopalachari, Ajoy Ghosh and Ashok Mehta as arbitrators on the issue of Punjabi Suba but the proposal fell on deaf ears. He impliedly suggested that if J.P. was entrusted with the task of arbitration, he would break his fast.

The Communist Party of India strongly criticised the Pb. govt. in its meeting held at Delhi 13.9/61, for letting loose brutal repression. Soon after, the headquarters of the Communist Party in Pb. were sealed and on 2/9, Harkishan Singh Surjit, along with his 39 communist companions, was arrested. Kairon became desperate and stated to the Press on 12/9/61, that the Akalis had liasion with Pakistan officials. On 15/9, he alleged that the liquor was being used in the Gurdwaras. Master's condition was deteriorating very fast and the well-wishers continued to approach the Central leaders to avert Master's death. The appointment of a Commission, they suggested, would be the real solution out of that impasse. On 17/9, Nehru stated in the Press Conference that the Punjabi

Suba issue would not be referred as such to the High Power Commission but "how far it creeps in, I cannot say...It is for the Commission to decide whether the issue (Punjabi Suba) came within the broad term of reference or not..." S. Gurnam Singh on behalf of the Akali Dal met Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri on 18/9, but it proved fruitless. Maharaja Patiala also met Mr. Shastri, the then Union Home Minister, but nothing concrete came out. On 25/9, there was a meeting between Pt. Nehru on one side and S. Gurnam Singh and Maharaja Patiala on the other. S. Gurnam Singh informed on 26/9, that the talks had failed as there was no accord on the choice of the Commission's personnel. The Dal's Working Committee met on 26/9 and asked Maharaja Patiala to put an end to his talks with the govt. The resolution was passed stating *inter alia* : "On getting a report from S. Gurnam Singh on his talks with the govt. while Master Tara Singh is lying on the verge of death and is physically incapacitated, let us place on record that the present govt. does not want to arrive at any reasonable decision with regard to the formation of the Punjabi-speaking State. Through a slow process of talks and more talks, it is only trying to reduce the force of impact of Master Ji's fast on the conscience of the people all over the world ; otherwise the ruling party, so it appears, had taken a firm decision long ago on Master Ji's death, and we doubt very much if it is at all serious about accepting any plausible or rational approach. We would, therefore, request the Maharaja of Patiala, while thanking him, to please put an end to his talks with the Govt. which is intrasigent, and is not tenable to any reasonable or democratic approach to a rational solution that one can think of, and which it seems, has positively decided on Master Tara Singh's death. We have further declared that if a new line of demarcation, which may annex some addl. Punjabi-speaking area is drawn, we will accept such a new boundary line as well. We have declared that if such a new demarcation rasults in making the Hindus a majority community and the Sikhs a minority community in the Punjabi-speaking area, it will be acceptable to us because the demand is linguistic and not communal On 27/9, Master reached the zone of extreme seriousness. There was complete stalemate in the negotiations. The Akalis had the impression that J. P. would intervene. On 29/9, Nehru appealed to Master and Yogiraj Surya Dev to break fasts. On 30/9, H. S. Malik met the Home Minister and the talks revolved around the proposed High Power Commission. After 48 days, Master broke the fast on 1/10/61, at 7.00 P. M. by sipping lemon juice mixed with honey and water offered by Sant Fateh Singh and the Maharaja of Patiala. The decision for breaking the fast was already approved of by the Dal's Working Committee which met a little earlier before the fast was broken.



On 1/10/61, Master Tara Singh broke his 48-day fast. Sant Ji, Maharaja Patiala, Pritam Singh Sarihn, Ujjagar Singh Ulfat, Hargurnad Singh, Harcharan Singh Hudiara, Harbans Singh Gujral. Malik Mukhbain Singh, H.S. Gujjarkhani Abdul Ghani Dhar, and others are seen in the picture.

DAS COMMISSION

Master Ji reached Delhi on 28/10/61, and he along with Malik Hardit Singh had an interview with the P. M. on 30/10. The discussions centred around the proposed Commission. The Enquiry Commission comprising Mr. S. K. Das, the former Chief Justice of India, Mr. M. C. Chagla and Dr. C. P. Ramaswamy Ayyer was appointed on 31/10. Master stated on 2/11/61, that the Commission was formed without consulting him, therefore, its verdict would not be binding upon them. but the Home Minister stated on 3/11 that no assurance whatsoever was ever given to the Akalis on the choice of Commission's personnel. The Working Committee of the Dal met on 9/11/61, and resolved: "This meeting of the Shiromani Akali Dal Working Committee feels amazed at the attitude of the Government in forming a High Power Commission, the personnel of which was quite different from that which was communicated by the negotiators and the mediators to Master Tara Singh during his fast..." That version of the Dal was contested by the P. M. in his statement : "But one thing is absolutely clear in my mind, that at no stage of our talks, did I agree directly or indirectly to the appointment

of any names suggested by them on the Commission...Ultimately one name was of Mr. Jai Parkash Narain. Even to that I said, "We will consider that name also together with others, but we cannot give an assurance about this or any one else's selection......" "The Akalis expressed lack of confidence in the personnel of the commission and its terms of reference; they asked the Sikhs to boycott the commission's proceedings. The community displayed remarkable unanimity in disassociating itself from the proceedings of the Das Commission."47 The scope of reference was : "This commission may go into the general question of discrimination and examine any charges of differential treatment or grievances of the Sikhs." The commission submitted its report on 31-1-62, and the same was released to the Press on 9/2/62. According to it, no evidence was found to substantiate the allegations of discrimination against the Sikhs. A group of the so-called 'Nationalist Sikhs' consisting of Dr. Gopal Singh Dardi, Jathedar Santokh Singh of Delhi, and Rajinder Singh Bhatia Journalist appeared before the Commission to give a clean chit to the govt. that the Sikhs were not at all being discriminated. Dardi was amply and promptly rewarded with his nomination as a member to the Rajya Sabha. S. Kartar Chawla, a Lawyer from the Punjab High Court, appeared in his personal capacity and stated that he could refer to certain secret circulars and documents which would prima facie establish discrimination against the Sikhs provided he was granted amnesty. When the Commission refused to grant the request, S. Chawla did not rather could not proceed further.

MASTER AND SANT 'CHARGE-SHEETED', 'TRIED', 'CONVICTED' AND 'PUNISHED'

On November 15, 61, Jiwan Singh Umranangal sent a notice to Master asking him to resign from the Presidentship SGPC and the Akali Dal by 20/11. Lachhman Singh, the then Junior Vice President of the SGPC sent a similar letter to Master on 20/11/61, calling upon him to resign as he had violated his oath/pledge taken before the Akal Takhat. S. Umranangal began his hunger strike on 21/11, in front of Teja Singh Samundri Hall pressing Master to resign from the above offices. It was also made known that Harcharan Singh Hudiara, the then Junior Vice President of Akali Dal was to go on hunger strike on 28/11, when 7-day fast kept by Umranangal was to be ended. Because of the good offices of some Akalis, the differences stood patched up on 23/11, and Master ordered the reinstatement of the already suspended 4 members from the Akali Dal, its Working Committee and the SGPC. Master and Sant issued a statement adverting to the decision arrived at between the two

groups to refer the dispute to the arbitration of Five Piyare* namely: Gianis Achhar Singh (Head Priest of Akal Takhat), Bhupinder Singh (Head Priest of Golden Temple), Chet Singh, Kirpal Singh and Sharam Singh, who were to decide as to whether or not Master and Sant violated their pledges taken before going on fasts in connection with the demand for Punjabi Suba. On 25/11/61, second time** in 150 years, a Commission of Sikh religious heads met at Akal Takhat and started examining almost all the leaders including H.S. Malik, Gurnam Singh, Gurbaksh Singh Adv.



*On 29/11/61, in the presence of more than 15,000 Sikhs, the Five Piyare asked Master and Sant as to whether they would honour their verdict or not. Master with folded hands stated, "If I have committed a mistake, correct me. If I have done the right thing march with me. If I have acted treacherously, punish me." Sant also said, "Yes Sir, your order shall be honoured both in letter as well as in spirit. Who am I to say no ?"*** In the picture Master and Sant are seen standing with folded hands before the Five Pyaras for receiving their verdict.*

*"The textual Court of five consisting of the high priests of Akal Takhat, Patna Sahib, Hazur Sahib, Anandpur Sahib, and Golden Temple."

**The first occasion arose when Akali Phula Singh had reprimanded Maharaja Ranjit Singh for his delinquent act.

***From the interviews and the Spokesman, November 6, 1961.

Umranangal, who were in the know of the background of the fasts. Master's tape-recorded speech was also played back before the Commission. The terms of reference included any mi take, weakness, or humilitation of any one about the ending of the fasts-unto death oberved in connection with the achievement of Punjabi Suba.

On 29/11/61, the Five Piyare gave their verdict that Master and Sant had not fulfilled their vows. 8 members of the Working Committee of the Dal were also 'convicted' for having permitted Master to break the fast. When all the leaders agreed with folded hands to abide by the decision of the Five Piyare, Giani Achhar Singh announced the decision. Master's 'sentence' was to the effect that he was to perform one *Akhand Path* and to recite more prayers besides his daily routine prayers. It was also ordered that he was to offer *Karah Parsad* of Rs. 125/-, and was to clean utensils and shoes of the congregation in any gurdwara for 5 days. Master did not utter even a single word and went home. The other leaders were given punishments in proportion to their guilt, which they cheerfully accepted.



Master Tara Singh is seen undergoing the punishment awarded to him by the Fvie Piyare on 29/11/1961.

1962—ELECTIONS

(Kairon becomes the Chief Minister for the 2nd term.)

Punjab went to polls on 24/2/62 and the Congress came out

victorious. Out of 154 seats, the Congress got 90, Akalis 19, Jan Sangh 8, Communists 9, Swatantra 3, Socialist 4 and independents 21 seats. The percentage of the votes polled by the Congress and the Akalis was 43.7 and 11.9 respectively. "Akalis, supporters of the Punjabi Suba carried the majority of the Sikh Voters." The most controversial election was of Kairon, who retained his seat "only by a dubious majority of 34 votes." Before the official declaration, the Akalis declared their candidate, Mohan Singh Tur, as having won the election by getting 185 votes more, however, the official declaration created a very big tension in the *Ilaqa*. Master sat in *Dharna* in the School where the votes were counted. Finding the situatlon highly explosive Master was arrested on 26/2/62 and after detaining for 5½ hours, he was left at his house at Amritsar.

On 6/3/62, Kairon was unanimously elected as the leader of the Congress Assembly Party. On 12/3, the swearing-in ceremony took place when the Governor administered the oath to the ministers. S. Kairon took Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava, Pt. Mohan Lal, Giani Kartar Singh, S. Darbara Singh, Mr. Brish Bhan, and Ch. Ranbir Singh as Cabinet Ministers.* For the first time, the Ministers of State were also administered the oath and they included Dr. Parkash Kaur, S. Niranjan Singh Talib, Mr. Yash, Mr. Harbans Lal, Mr. Chand Ram, Mr. Prem Singh Prem, Giani Zail Singh, Mr Ram Kishan, and Bhagwat Dayal. Bakshi Partap Singh, Prof. Yashwant Rai, Capt. Rattan Singh, Ch. Sunder Singh, Mrs. Om Prabha Jain, and S/Shri Hari Ram, Harcharan Singh Brar, Harchand Singh, and Banarsi Dass Gupta were administered the oaths as the Deputy Ministers. On 13/3/62, Mr. Tayyab Hussain, S. Gulab Singh, and Mrs. Chandravati were taken as the Deputy Minister, Chief Parliamentary Secretary and the Parliamentary Secretary respectively.

AKALI DAL BECOMES A DIVIDED HOUSE

Master Tara Singh had never been in the favour of the fast but because of the compulsions of the situation, he had to keep it. The Akali leaders, who wanted the fast to be broken, were under the genuine impression that the govt. was bent upon to kill Master and in no case, the Sikhs should allow their leader to die. The persons who wanted the fast to be broken, became the first and worst critics of Master for having broken the pledge taken at the Akal Takhat. Manifestly speaking, Master's leadership was on the wane after he broke the fast. H. S.

*S. Rarewala was not inducted by Kairon in his ministry.

Hudiara, L. S. Gill and J. S. Umranangal were determined to oust Master who was constrained to suspend Umranangal from the Dal's Working Committee on 4/7/62, on the ground of indiscipline and disruption in the Party. Umranagal's group alleged bogus enrolment in the organizational elections by the Master's Group, which on the other hand alleged that Umranangal was playing in the hands of Kairon. On 8/7, Lachhman Singh Gill was also suspended from the offices, he held in the Dal and the Vidhan Sabha. Sant Fateh Singh unsuccessfully endeavoured to remove the differences. On 15/7/62, all the dissident leaders met in Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Moga, where they decided to give a fight to Master's Group. By 20/7/1962, Sant was on the side of Hudiara, Gill and Umranangal somuch so that on 24/7, Sant rejected the rapprochement offer made by Master. On 4/8/62, Sant made a full-fledged frontal attack on Master for causing frustration among the Sikh masses because of ending the fast without achieving Punjabi Suba.

SANT SUSPENDED AND REMOVED FROM AKALI DAL

Master Ji, in his capacity as the President of the Akali Dal, suspended Sant Ji, the Senior Vice-President, on 10/8/62, for a period of 2 years from the basic membership of the Dal on the ground that he was indulging in the most regrettable activities detrimental to the solidarity of the Dal. Sant and Kairon became closer to each other as both of them were eager to oust Master from the political arena, and, therefore, they conspired to dislodge Master's Group from the control of the SGPC. On 17/8, Master, Kirpal Singh Chaksherewala (President of the SGPC), Atma Singh (General Secretary of the Akali Dal) were arrested for the apprehension of breach of peace.

Sant's group sent the requisition asking the President to hold the general meeting of the SGPC before 6/9/62. Thus, the fight between the two warring groups shifted from an impending clash to a constitutional fight over the motion of no confidence against Chaksherewala, who boldly accepted the same. The leaders and the supporters of both the rival groups fanned out throughout the State to enlist support for the trial of strength. The Pb. Govt. was openly on the side of Sant's group. On 2/9, the no confidence motion was carried by 76 votes to 72, giving a deadly blow to Master's leadership particularly in the SGPC. S. Kirpal Singh Chaksherewala, Master's trusted man was replaced by Sant Chanan Singh, the Sant's nominee.

On 16/9, Master, under the mandate of the general body meeting of the Dal, held on 19/8, expelled Sant on the charge of disruptive activities



Loyalties in politics continue to roll hither and thither like a clock pendulum. Once Sant prayed, "May God give me enough strength to continue to sit at Masterji's feet throughout my life as his faithful and obedient soilder." From 1962 onwards, Sant became Master's biggest political rival. Picture** shows Sant sitting at Master's feet.*

including the formation of a parallel Akali Dal and the violation of its Constitution. On 4/11/62, Master got Jathedar Achhar Singh (former head priest of Akal Takhat) elected as the Akali Dal's President.

"Before the Akalis could mature their plans to make another bid for the Suba, however, the Chinese invaded*** Indian frontiers. The Sikhs suspended their agitation and eagerly joined in the defence of their country...The Punjab's contribution in men and material equalled that of the rest of the states of India put together. The only non-Punjabi district to exceed the Punjab districts' contribution in gold was Ganganagar in Rajasthan. Ganganagar is largely settled by Sikh refugees." 48 On 24/12/62, all the Sikh leaders assembled at Patiala and elected Maharaja Patiala as the Chief Organizer to harness the total resources of the Sikhs for the defence of the country. On 7/2/63, Sant presented a cheque of

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*Speech of Sant Fateh Singh on 16/7/58, delivered at *Jap Tap Smagam* at Anandpur Sadib.

**Courtesy : 'The History of the Sikhs.'

***China committed the aggression in October, 1962, and the President of India declared the state of emergency in the country.

Rs. 50,000 to the Prime Minister on behalf of the SGPC as its contribution to the national defence fund.

SANT FATEH SINGH GOES IN SELF-IMPOSED EXILE

Kairon reduced his cabinet to 9 members* only on 1/1/63. Giani Kartar Singh, Mr. Brish Bhan as well as all the State and the Deputy Ministers were dropped. Because of the opposition against Kairon, particularly in the legislative wing, he was anxious to consolidate his position. Two Akali legislators, Lakhi Singh and Dalip Singh were lured by Kairon to the Congress fold. Umranangal, Hudiara and Tirlochan Singh announced their decision to go on hunger strike at the houses of the defected legislators but before they could do so, Kairon got them arrested. When Sant met Nehru on 7/2/63, the former protested against the arrests but it bore not fruit. On 24/4/63, at 4 A. M. Sant went into *Agyyat Vas* and left for an unknown place. He left a note in his room expressing his deep anguish and resentment against the emergency being exploited by the Congress. He went into seclusion to seek inner light. Sant came back from Gurdwara Guru Ka Lahore situated near Anandpur Sahib on 2/6/63, after 40-day ordeal.

WITH THE UNCEREMONIAL EXIT OF KAIRON, RAM KISHEN BECOMES THE C. M.

Master's group moved the no confidence motion against Sant Chanan Singh on 18/6/63, but the General Body of the SGPC rejected it by 81 to 62 votes. As usual, Master did not lose heart and he concentrated his energies in bringing anti-Kairon elements on one platform. Accordingly, on 28/7, almost all the Opposition parties formed Anti-corruption Front, which submitted a memorandum to the President of India listing the allegations of corruption against the C. M. Having failed to vanquish Kairon in the PPCC elections, the dissidents**

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*They were : Kairon, Bhargo, Mohan Lal, Darbara Singh, Gurbanta Singh, Ram Saran Mittal, Ranbir Singh (Ch.), Ajmer Singh, and Gulab Singh (Chief Parliamentary Secretary).

**The dissidents included S/Shri Hardwari Lal, G. S. Dhillon, Virender, Mehar Chand Ahuja, Ram Chander, T. S. Riyasti, Rarewala, Ram Piara, Khursheed Ahmed, Kanwar Lal Sharma, D. D. Khanna, Roop Lal Mehta and others. (Giani Kartar Singh, Gurmit Singh and Jasdev Singh Sandhu had formed 'Praja Tantar Party' on 22/12/63, but they dissolved the same on 25/2/64 and joined the Congress dissidents.



Com. Ram Piara fiercely fought against Kairon both in the Assembly and outside. Before the Das Commission, he had the courage to file affidavits against Kairon and his relatives. Picture shows Comrade with Kairon and G. B. Pant at Karnal in 1958.

filed the charge-sheet to the Congress President on 28/8/63. Kairon was becoming increasingly unpopular.* Moreover, the P. M. could ill-afford to brush-aside the serious allegations levelled against Kairon and his relatives, consequently, Mr S. R. Das, Ex-Chief Justice of India, a 1-man Commission, was asked to carry out the probe. Nehru's death on 27/5/64, left Kairon without his main support. Kairon wrongly assessed the situation when he sided with Desai in the neck to neck race between the latter and Shastri. When the Commission found him guilty on 2 counts out of 32 charges in the report submitted to the P. M. on 11/6/64, Kairon resigned on 14/6/64. Swaran Singh was sounded for the Chief Ministership but he declined. On 30/6/64. Mr. Ram Kishan was elected as the leader of the Congress Assembly Party as he was found acceptable to both Swaran Slngh and Kairon.

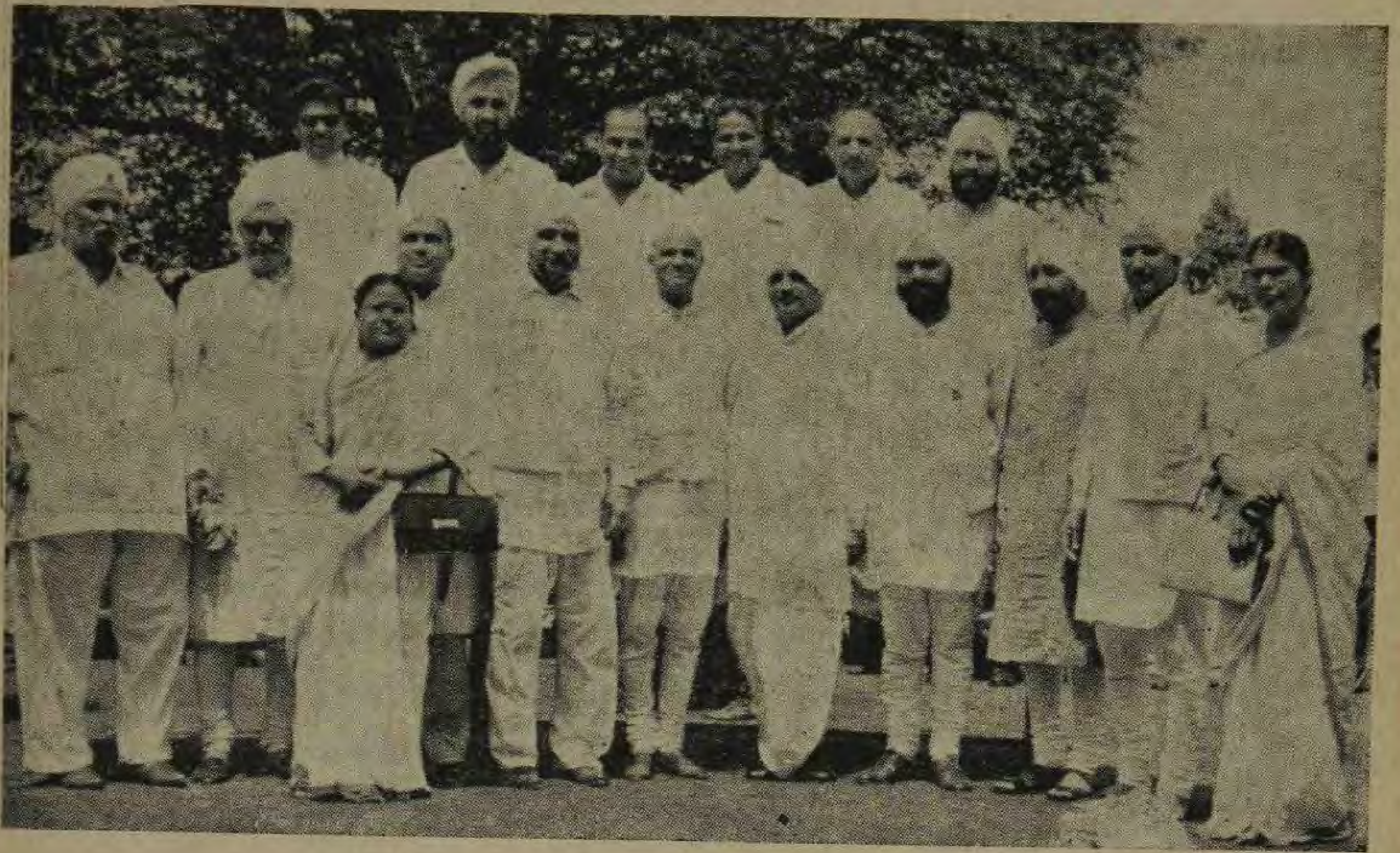
RAM KISHAN

Mr. Ram Kishan was sworn in as the Pb's C. M. on 6/7/64. S/Shri Darbara Singh, Parbodh Chander, Kapur Singh, and Rizak Ram, were taken as the Ministers while Ch. Sunder Singh was inducted in the ministry as the Deputy Minister. He expanded his ministry on 3/6/65, when S. Gurdial Singh Dhillon, Ch. Ranbir Singh, S. Ajmer Singh, S. Prem Singh Prem, Ch. Chand Ram, Mrs. Om Prabha Jain were taken as

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*The murderous assault on Com. Ram Piara at Karnal on 17/7/63 and the acceptance of Dr. Partap Singh's appeal by the Supreme Court on 2/9/63, put Kairon on the horns of dilemma.

the Cabinet Ministers. Capt. Rattan Singh and Ch. Sunder Singh were included as the Ministers of the State, while S. Gurmit Singh, Mrs. Chandra Vati were accommodated as the Deputy Ministers. Mr. Gian Chand Totu was sworn in as the Deputy Minister on 6/6/65.



The Ram Kishen's Expanded Ministry. Front Row L to R : Maj. Harinder Singh, S. Ajmer Singh, Mrs. Om Prabha Jain, Ch. Sunder Singh, S. Darbara Singh, Com. Ram Kishan, Ch. Ranbir Singh. S. Gurdial Singh Dhillon, S. Prem Singh Prem, Ch. Rizak Ram, and Smt. Chandra Vati. Back row : L to R : Ch. Chand Ram, S. Gurmit Singh, Sh. Ram Partap Garg (Chief Parliamentary Secretary) Capt. Rattan Singh and Shri Gian Chand Totu and S. Kapur Singh.

Mr. Ram Kishan was born in 1919 at Kot Issa Shah in West Pb. He came to public life in 1928 under the influence of L. Lajpat Rai, when he was arrested as a College student for shouting slogans against the then Governor Sir Geoffrey de Mount Morency. He had been working as the Secretary of the Congress Committee from 1934 to 1948 and had been a member of the AICC for 15 years. He went to jail for 5 times. In 1956, he joined Kairon ministry as Deputy Minister, however, his term ended in 1957 when he lost to Jan Sangh at the polls, but he retrieved the seat in 1962, when he was re-elected from the Jullundur constituency. He joined Kairon's ministry on 12/3/62 as the Minister of State, but he was

divested of his office on 1/1/63, when Kairon reduced the size of his ministry due to Emergency.

MASTER'S SELF-IMPOSED EXILE TO UNDISCLOSED PLACE*

(The secret meetings between the top Akali leaders and Kairon)

Giani Bhupinder Singh became the President of the Master Akali Dal on 22/1/64, when Jathedar Achhar Singh resigned as his moves for bringing unity between the rival Dals proved abortive. On 22/5/64, the police in Himachal Pradesh killed several Nihang Sikhs in Gurdwara Paonta Sahib. The Akali Dals (Master & Sant) formed a joint committee, which gave a call to the Sikhs to be prepared for every sacrifice to restore the sanctity of the Gurdwara. I-man Commission consisting of the judge of the Allahabad High Court was appointed to go through the whole incident. The commission submitted an adverse report against the Nihang Sikhs. The emergent meeting of the Working Committee of Master Akali Dal held at New Delhi on 20/7/66, was constrained to pass the resolution:

"This emergent meeting of the Working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal, after having carefully viewed the findings, the reports and judgments of judicial and quasi judicial Tribunals and Forums that have dealt with matters and cases involving important Sikh interests comes to the conclusion that the entire judicial machinery and the judicial process of the independent India, under influence of a certain section of political Hindus, is prejudiced and has been perverted against the Sikh people in India in relation to their just and legal rights. Therefore, this meeting, on behalf of the Sikh people calls upon the World opinion in general, and forums and organisations of international and Common—wealth Jurists, to set up appropriate machinery to go into and report upon the subtle and persistent denial of fundamental human rights to the Sikh people in a free and independent India."

After the resignation, Kairon was eager to get himself politically rehabilitated, therefore, he successfully tried to patch up with Master so that he could have the backing of the sizeable number of the Sikhs. Kairon, Giani and Rarewala, who once opposed Master to the tooth, gave their unflinching support for putting him in power in the SGPC.

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*Master went to Salogra which is situated near Solan in Himachal Pradesh.



Ch. Harbha gwan Singh Adv. stood by S. Kairon throguh thick and thin. He got three secret meetings arranged: between (1) Kairon and Sant in 1961, (2) Kairon and Master in May , 1964, and (3) Kairon and Teja Singh Swatantar in 1964.

At the initiative of late Jathedar Buta Singh, Giani Hari Singh, and Ch. Harbhagwan Singh Adv., a meeting between Master and Kairon was got arranged at Pinjore in May, 1964, when Kairon lamented for politically weakening Master. He promised to extend his full support, but he could not help much. Because of the death of Pt. Nehru on 27/5/64, Kairon had to leave Pb. for Delhi. Harbhagwan also referred to the meeting which was got arranged at Chandigarh between Sant Fateh Singh and Kairon at his house in 1961. Kairon told Sant, "Let us shake hands with each other .." Giani Hari Singh mentioned about the meeting, he got arranged between Master and Kairon at Bassi Pathanan in 1957. Kairon was reported to have said, "Master Ji, you can get any thing done from me for the Sikhs but in no case, I will allow Baldev Singh to dominate the political scene..." Master commented. "In spite of the fact that you are the son of Nihal Singh, a great *Singh Sabhiya,* (the person who actively participated in the Singh Sabha movement) you had awfully damaged the Sikh cause, and, eventually, you are bound to repent.. " When the vote of no confidence was tabled by Master's group against the President of the SGPC, it was rejected on 1/6/64, by a margin of 26 votes.



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Giani Hari Singh Journalist, who remained P. A. to Master Tara Singh for a fairly long time, got Master--Kairon meeting arranged at Haveli Mughalan (residence of S. Gurbachan Singh Kalsia) at Bassi Pathana in December, 1957.

The SGPC elections were due in January, 1965, therefore, the well-wishers of the *Panth* held a Panthic Conference at Patiala on 19/11, with Sant Gurmukh Singh in the chair for forging unity. Negotiation committee comprising Rarewala (Convener), Sant Gurmukh Singh,

Udham Singh, Teja Singh and A.S. Sarhadi was appointed to evolve the Unity formula after contacting the leaders of both the organisations. The Committee did its best but its efforts yielded no results. The Sant group swept into power in the SGPC. When the election results were out on 18/1/65, 90 and 45 seats were captured by the Sant and Master groups respectively. On 19/1, Rarewala called upon Master to quit the scene so that the Sant could lead the community.

On 20/1/65, Master, along with his wife, left for undisclosed place. Before leaving, he stated *inter alia* that he was not to stand in Sant's way for achieving Punjabi Suba and that he was "taking the plunge in the name of Guru Gobind Singh, the embodiment of sacrifice." Commenting on the election results, Sarup Singh and Satbir Singh, the former Presidents of the AISSF, stated that with Sant's victory, Communists had a back-door entry in Sikh politics and the real problems facing the community remained untouched.

GENERAL HARI SINGH NALWA CONFERENCE & MASTER'S RETURN

(Self-determined political status within India demanded)

During Master's absence from pol. scene, Sant brought a hornet's nest by doing almost nothing for achieving Punjabi Suba. No doubt, he kept the demand alive by holding a few conferences here and there but on the whole, his performance was unimpressive—if not disappointing—as he took no steps to prepare the community for the struggle. Sant's in-action created frustration. Akali Dal (Master) rose to the occasion and carried the day by holding a very big General Hari Singh Nalwa Conference* at Ludhiana, where on 4/7/65, the historical resolution was drafted, moved and seconded by S. Kapur Singh, S. Gurnam Singh and Giani Bhupinder Singh respectively. It read : "This Conference in commemoration of of General Hari Singh Nalwa of historical fame reminds all concerned that the Sikh people are makers of history and are conscious of their pol. destiny in a free India. This Conference recalls that the Sikh people agreed to merge into a Common Indian Nationality on the explicit understanding of being accorded a constitutional status of co-sharers in the Indian sovereignty along with the majority community, which solemn understanding now stands cynically repudiated by the present rulers of India. Further, the Sikhs have been systematically reduced to a sub-political

*Maharaja Yadvindera Singh also attended the Conference but he left it before the momentous resolution was moved.

status in their homeland, the Pb., and to an insignificant position, in their mother-land, India. The Sikhs are in a position to establish before an impartial International Tribunal, un-influenced by the present Indian rulers, that the law, the judicial process. and the executive action of the Union of India are consistently and heavily weighed against the Sikhs and are administered with unbandaged eyes against the Sikh Citizens.

This conference, therefore, resolves, after careful thought, that there is left no alternative for the Sikhs in the interest of self-preservation but to frame their pol. demand for securing a self-determined pol. status within the Republic of the Union of India." That resolution captured the imagination of the Sikhs and it stole a march upon the Sant Akali Dal.

It will be pertinent to refer to the resolution passed by the Akali Dal (Master Group) on 20/7/66, when the Sikh Homeland within the Indian Union was demanded. It was resolved that the Sikh areas deliberately excluded in the new Pb. be immediately included in the proposed Pb. "Such a new State of Pb. should be granted an autonomous constitutional status similar to the one granted to the State of Jammu & Kashmir in the Constitution Act of India as it stood framed in 1950.

Master returned from Salogra on 24/7/65, after 6-month-self-imposed exile and announced his re-entry in politics by making a scathing attack on the Congress and the Sant. Sant was obviously caught napping. Master told the press at Chandigarh that he decided to re-enter politics to ensure dignity, honour and freedom for the *Panth*. According to him, his chief mission was to oust Congress which was ill-treating the minorities all over the country, and that neither the country nor the religion were safe so long as the Congress was in power. At last, the Working Committee



Bhagat Puran Singh, the mother Teresa of the Sikhs. He is following the footsteps of Bhai Kanihya. He has dedicated his life to the service of humanity. He nurses the patients crippled with paralysis and leprosy with the motherly devotion. The shelterless patients, who are refused admission in the hospitals because of their suffering from deadly and incurable diseases, flock to him for shelter.

of the Akali Dal (Sant group) adopted a resolution : "...A number of other States have already been formed on a linguistic basis including Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala and even Nagaland. The failure to form a Punjabi Suba on the same principle is a clear discrimination against the people of Punjab."

SANT—SHASTRI MEETING

On August 7, 1965, Sant, accompanied by Uttam Singh Duggal, Lachhman Singh Gill, Mann Singh (of *Mansrovar*) and Arjan Singh Budhiraja, met the P. M. and the Home Minister at the P.M.'s residence at 7. P.M. and the talks continued upto 10 P.M. Sant reiterated the demand for Punjabi Suba & referred to the discriminatory and the stepmotherly treatment, the Sikhs were getting from the Govt. The H.M. told : "The govt. cares a fig for Master's threats, while it has got great regards for the Sant Ji, who, unlike Master Ji, has been consistent both in thought and action. The Govt. has no faith in what Master says." The P.M. supported the H.M. and warned, "If Master tried to do something, we will crush him within 5 minutes." Sant retorted : "Shastri Ji, you are in possession of great resources ; you can crush any body. Since Master is weaker, he can be crushed within five minutes, but we being a little stronger, can be crushed within seven minutes..."49.

Sant, Duggal, Gill and Budhiraja met the P.M. on 8/8/65 at 9 P.M. The H. M , G.L. Nanda, Ram Kishen (Pb.'s C.M.), Darbara Singh (Pb.'s H.M.), and the Home Secretary of the Central Govt. were already present with the P.M. A 3-page note was circulated by the P.M. When Sant found that it was conspicuously silent about the Punjabi Suba demand, the meeting came to an abrupt end. Sant was much disappointed. On 14/8/65, the note prepared by P.M.'s secretariat during Shastri-Sant's talks was placed before the Akali Dal's Working Committee which recorded its protest : "The Government of India did not trust the Punjabis in general and the Sikhs in particular."

SANT'S FAST UNTO DEATH

On 16/8/65, Sant Fateh Singh declared from the Akal Takhat that he would undertake fast unto death w.e.f. 10/9/65. He further announced that on 15/8/65, he would adopt the path of self-immolation by burning himself. More than 25,000 people listened to the Sant in a pin-drop silence. Sant's decision was ratified by the Dal's Working Committee. On the other hand, the sky was overcast with war clouds as the Pakistani infiltrations became serious in proportion. On 27/8, Master and Sant met each other at

the 4th floor of Akal Takhat and it was the first meeting since both the leaders had parted company. Masters's Akali Dal extended full support to the Sant's mission. On 31/8, 15 Sikh Congress M.L.As.* under the leadership of Rarewala appealed to the Govt. of India that the Punjabi Suba be accepted in principle.

All the important leaders of the country appealed to Sant for postponing the decision of self-immolation. Eventually, a 5-man deputation including Sant Chanan Singh, S. Tohra, S. Hudiara met the H.M. at Delhi on 8/9/65, in response to the latter's invitation. The H.M. assured that the demand for the Punjabi Suba would be favourably considered. On 9/9/65 the Akali Dal's Working Committee advised the Sant to postpone the fast in view of the Pak-aggression and on the same day, Sant announced accordingly.

22—EVENTFUL DAYS
(1965-PAK AGGRESSION)

On 1/9/1965, two major developments took place: the Pakistan forces crossed the Indian border in Jammu & Kasmir and S. Ujjal Singh was appointed as the Pb. Governor whose appointment was made to assuage the Sikh feelings on the Punjabi Suba issue. "Instead of exploiting the situation, Akali leaders deciared their unqualified support to the government. Once again Sikh soldiers crossed swords with the Pakistanis and Sikh peasantry rallied to the support of their fighting forces carrying food and help to the battle front. Amongst the many officers who distinguished themselves in 22—day war the most outstanding was Lt. General Harbaksh Singh to whom went the credit of halting the Pakistani tank offensive into Indian territory. Of all the States of the Indian Union, Punjab's contribution in aid of defence was the highest; of all the districts of India the top contribution came from Ganganagar in Rajasthan, largely populated by Sikh farmers. Insinuations of Sikh dis-



Lt. General Harbaksh Singh.

*Among others, they included G. S. Rarewala, T. S. Riyasti, P S. Sahoke, Kartar Singh (Giani), Dilbagh Singh, H.S. Brar, Harchand Singh, Umrao Singh, Gurdarshan Singh, J. S. Sandhu, N. S. Shahbazpuri and R. S. Nanewalia.

loyalty so assiduously spread by anti-Sikh elements were thus silenced."(50) General J. N. Chaudhry (Chief of the Army Staff) and Air Marshal Arjan Singh (Chief of the Air Staff) wer conferred the nation's second highest civilian award Padma Vibhushan, while Lt. General Harbaksh Singh, Lt. General K. S. Katoch, Lt. General J.S. Dhillon, Lt. General P. O. Dunn, Air Vice Marshal P. C. Lall, and Air Vice Marshal R. Rajaram were awarded Padma Bhushan. Pakistan accepted the cease-fire on 22/9/65. Paying compliments to the Punjabis and the Armed Forces, the Pb. Governor addressed both the House of the Assembly on 14/2/66 with the words: "Whereas our Armed Forces personnel enhanced their prestige by their many deeds of daring courage and sacrifice, our people in Punjab, cultivators, traders, workmen, and even women every where exhibited rare qualities of resourcefulness, forebearance and fortitude, and gave valuable assistance to the Army and the police in many ways, and the public services of all categories played their role magnificently. The zeal, enthusiasm and the daring spirit displayed by the truck-drivers, conductors and cleaners in driving their vehicles against all odds to carry supplies to the Army, our Police, our Home Guards in fighting the enemy and apprehending the paratroopers, were truly commendable."



Principal Teja Singh (2/6/1894-13/10/1965). He wrote a fairly large number of useful books and articles both in English and Punjabi on various aspects of Sikhism. He came to the limelight when in June, 49, he declared that Pb.'s mother tongue, which is one in Punjabi-speaking region, should alone be adopted as the medium of instructions.

PUNJABI SUBA CONCEIVED

On September 23, 1965, the Home Minister announced 3-man Suba Committee of the Union Cabinet consisting of Mrs. Indria Gandhi, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, and Mr. Mahabir Tyagi to examine afresh and discover a 'co-operative solution' to the demand for Punjabi Suba. The Sub-Committee was to be assisted and advised by the Parliamentary Committee to be set up with S. Hukam Singh, the then Speaker, as the President. The Sub Committee "reported in favour of redrawing the boundaries of the Punjab on a linguistic basis. Lal Bahadur Shastri's sudden death at Tashkent on January 10, 1966, ended the chapter of the central government's hostility to the concept of the Punjabi Suba. Indira Gandhi who became Prime Minister cut Gulzari Lal Nanda, himself as

aspirant for the post, to his proper size. Kamaraj, known as the "King-Maker" for the role he played in rallying support in favour of Indira Gandhi, was President of the Indian National Congress. The affairs of the Punjab were given priorty. The Congress Working Committee was summoned and on March 10, 1966 passed a resolution to the effect that "out of the existing State of Punjab a State with Punjabi as the State language be formed. The government is requested to take necessary steps for this purpose..."There was strong opposition to the resolution. But Kamaraj carried the majority with him: "How can the Punjabis be denied the benefit of the very national principle which the people of other States were already enjoying, the right to have, live and work under their own linguistic State?" he argued. The Defence Minister, Y. B. Chavan, conscious of the Sikhs' unqualified support in the hostilities against



Lt. Geneneral Kulwant Singh. He was an eminent strategist. His contribution as a General in Kashmir war (October-November, 1947) was remarkable He died of heart attack on 2/1/66. In the picture, he is seen standing with Kairon, some of the then ministers and Kairon's relatives.

Pakistan, supported him. He said: "A decision on the demand of a Punjabi State could not be delayed because of the geographical position of the Punjab." Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was fiirm in her decision: "The Working Committee has passed a resolution and now we (the government) have to implement it."...The decision of the Indian National Congress*

*Mr. Morarji Desai, Mr. Biju Patnaik and Dr. Ram Subheg Singh opposed the demand as communal.

was accepted by all the political parties of India save the Bharatiya Jan Sangh which condemned the Congress decision as "a blow to the forces of unity and integration of the country." The Jan Sangh was at the time dominated by Punjabi Hindus...The party organised mass demonstrations. In many Punjab towns, notably Panipat, there was looting, arson and blood-shed. The counter-Suba agitation though violent was of very short duration because the decision to bifurcate the old State was supported not only by the Sikhs but also by the Hindi-speaking populace of Haryana and Himachal. The only elements out of step with the march of events were the Punjabi Hindus. It soon dawned upon them that by denying their mother-tongue they were cutting their own roots in the Punjab and as a Punjabi-speaking people would become alien elements in Hindi-speaking Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. (51)

Now, "Indira Gandhi was in the saddle as Prime Minister Shastri died at Tashkant immediately after he had signed a peace pact with President Ayub Khan of Pakistan. Her mind was already made up in favour of the Punjabi Suba demand. Therefore, she overruled the objection of the leaders of Punjab Government. The parliamentary committee on 18th March 1965 recommended a bifurcation of the state, with the southern districts constituting a new state of Haryana and the hilly district of Kangra going to Himachal Pradesh. Accordingly, a boundary commission* under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Shah of the Supreme Court, was asked to report on demarcation of the boundaries. The Commission awarded Kharar tehsil including Chandigarh to Haryana, by a majority of two to one. In his dissenting note Subimal Dutt, a member of the commission, favoured the inclusion of Kharar and Chandigarh in Punjab...The government accepted the minority report regarding Kharar but declared Chandigarh to be Union Territory. The Punjab States Reorganisation Bill** was enacted by Parliament in

*Master and Sant Akali Dals protested that the Commission should not have relied upon 1961—Census, which were arrived at on the communal basis They demanded that pre-partition census should have been the basis to draw the boundary lines. Master Akali Dal boycotted the Commission.

**The Punjab Reorganisation Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 3/9/1966, and it was stoutly opposed by S. Kapur Singh in his speech delivered in the Lok Sabha on 6/9, the extracts out of which find place at page No. 104 of this book. The bill passed on 7/9, became the Act with the President's assent on 18/9/66. It provided for the creation of Punjab and Haryana from November 1, 1966.

September 1966 and it came into force on 1 November 1966. The new Punjab that emerged from this Act comprised the districts of Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jullundur, Ludhiana, Ferozepore, Bhatinda and part of Sangrur district excluding Jind and Narwana tehsils, Patiala district, and Rupar and Kharar tehsil of Ambala district. It had an area of 50,255 square kilometres and a population of 11,147,054, including 2,563,306 urban and 8,579,748 rural. The Sikhs constituted 55 per cent of the population...What irked the Sikhs in general and the Akali Dal in particular was not so much the retention of the many common links between Punjab and Haryana such as a common governor, a common high court, a common electricity board, the financial corporation and the housing corporation but the central take over of Chandigarh and of the Bhakra and Beas Dam Projects.(52)

GURMUKH SINGH MUSAFIR BECOMES THE CHIEF MINISTER OF PUNJAB

The Punjabi Suba defused the communal tension and the era of good-will and mutual understanding stood set-in. On 3-5-66, Sant Fateh Singh went on a holiday abroad. Mr. Ram Kishan submitted his and his Ministry's resignation on 20-6-64, and the same was accepted the next day. The division of the State into three units and the re-drawing of the boundaries necessitated the promulgation of the President's rule w. e. f. 6-7-67, which came to an end on 1-11-66, when S. Musafir headed the first Ministry of the re-organised Pb. S/Shri Brish Bhan, Prabodh Chandra, Mohan Lal, G. S. Rarewala, Darbara Singh, Harinder Singh, Prem Singh Prem, N. S. Talib, and Yashwant Rai were taken in as the Cabinet Ministers. S/Shri Yash, Rattan Singh, Harcharan Singh Brar, Karam Singh Kirti & Chand Ram Verma were sworn in as the Ministers of State. Dr. Parkash Kaur, Dr. Sham Lal Thapar, S/Shri Harchand Singh, Sat Pal Mittal, and Gurmail Singh were accommodated as the Dy. Ministers.

S. GURMUKH SINGH MUSAFIR

(1899—1976)

Honest and large-hearted Musafir had a pleasant and graceful personality, he insisted in making friends but no enemies. (Author)

S. Musafir was born in West Pakistan at Adhwal, Distt. Campbellpore. He used "Musafir" as a poetic pseudonym. In 1923, he joined Congress and actively participated in the Quit India Movement (1942-45). He was jailed and remained in Lahore Central and Multan Jails. He had been the *Jathedar* of Akal Takhat from 1931 to 33. He had the distinc-



Picture shows Musafir along with U. N. Dhebar, Master Tara Singh, Shriman Narayan and G. S. Dhillon in the Golden Temple in Feb. 1966. Courtesy : Inder Singh Sawhney, Asstt. Secretary, PPCC.

tion to work as the General Secretary of the Akali Dal and the SGPC. He became the member of the AICC in 1930, while he was elected as the member of the Constituent Assembly in 1947, He was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1957, and then to the Rajya Sabha. Since 1952, he had been the member of the AICWC. In 1967 elections, Musafir was defeated by a Communist, Mr. Satpal Dang, in Amritsar West Constituency. He was a distinguished poet and a writer of Punjabi literature.

SANT FATEH SINGH GOES ON FAST (1966)

On his return from foreign tour in November 66, Sant unsuccessfully sought the intervention of the President and the P.M. of India to secure (1) the severance of all the common links between Pb. and Haryana, (2) the inclusion of Chandigarh and the other left-out Punjabi-speaking areas in Pb. and (3) the restoration of the control of Bhakra & Beas Dam Projects to Pb. On 10/11, Sant called the representatives of all the opposition parties except the Akali Dal (Master group) and the Jan Sangh, and they assured full support in the contemplated agitation. Akali Dal (Master) strongly criticised the Sant for having gone abroad at the crucial time of the reorganisation of the State. On 16/11/66, the Working Committee of the

Akali Dal (Sant) appointed Sant as the dictator of the proposed agitation. According to the programme, 75 Akalis were to start from Gurdwara Manji Sahib in Golden Temple and they were to fan out in 3 directions in batches of 25 each converging at Kharar on 4/12 and then entering Chandigarh on 5/12 for holding a mass demonstration. S. Mohan Singh Tur, S. Shiv Singh Jhawan and S. Dulla Singh Rodey were to lead the respective batches. Accordingly 75 volunteers started from Amritsar on 20/11, in three groups covering three different routes but before they could meet at Kharar. they were arrested on 3/12, under sections 107/150 Cr. P.C. "No more *Jathas* were detailed thereafter. But on 5 December 1966 the Akali Dal Working Committee gave a call for observance of 12 December as Protest Day. The Sant seized the occasion to announce his decision to go on a fast from 17 December and to immolate himself on 27 December (*if he survived the fast*). This was the first time-bound ultimatum that any Akali leader had delivered so far...He was content to explain the significance of the two dates he had chosen for launching his fast and ending his life. On 17 December Guru Teg Bahadur was executed in Delhi and on 27 December two sons of the tenth Guru were bricked alive at Sirhind.(53) Supporting the Sant's demands, Master said on 6/12 : "I am in agreement with the Sant's demand for the abolition of the common links and the inclusion of Punjabi-speaking areas in Punjab, besides Chandigarh and the Dam projects. In fact, I go a step further and demand an autonomous status for Punjab in order to provide a real homeland for the Sikhs. "The Akali Dal (Master group) in the 17th All India Conference held on December 10 & 11, at Ludhiana, demanded the creation of Sikh Homeland, the removal of discrimination against the Sikhs and the restoration of Punjabi-speaking areas to Pb. Sant's stand was supported and it was resolved : "...this communal and narrow-minded Govt. will never treat us as equals. We should understand clearly that there is no place for justice and equality for us in this country. Hence our lives, honour, property and even our religion are in danger...We shall have to firmly decide, whether we have to live in Pb. as rulers or slaves."

On 26/12/66, Sant Chanan Singh, J. S. Umranangal, Mal Singh Chirrak, Dalip Singh Talwandi (now a Minister), Jagdev Singh Talwandi (now Akali Dal's President), Hazara Singh Gill & Jagir Singh Phagguwalia were to burn themselves to death at 4 P.M. The P.M. and the H.M. appealed to Sant to reconsider his stand. On 14/12, J. P. accompanied by J. J. Singh met Sant and on his return J. P. also met the H. M. but nothing concrete came out. On 16/12 Sant rejected P. M.'s fresh appeal requesting him

not to begin his scheduled fast. The Haryana Govt. showed its determination not to allow the exclusion of any area allotted to Haryana by the S. R. C. Yogiraj Suryadev, the President of the Vishva Naya Samaj also resorted to fast in opposing Sant's demand. Musafir, Hukam Singh and Zail Singh met Sant to find out some amicable solution but they returned disappointed from Amritsar on 24/12/66. They opined that the extremists in the Akali Dal had snatched the initiative from the moderates. "The Pb. Govt. had by that time arrested 1927 prominent Sikhs, and troops were made to march through the streets of Amritsar on the Christmas day to exhibit to the people the power and majesty of the Central Govt. On the same day, a 48—hour curfew was clamped on the walled area of the city, presumably in anticipation of the self-immolation intended on the 27th by the Akali leader.(54) On 26/12, I was attending *Jor Mela* at Fatehgarh Sahib, near Sirhind, and I very vividly recall a strange melange of grief, anger and bitterness writ large on the faces of Sikhs. The Manager of the main Gurdwara was in constant telephonic touch with Amritsar, and the grief-stricken people were being informed on loudspeakers about the latest developments. The 'martyrdoms' of Sant Chanan Singh and his companions were anticipated and the prayer was conducted from the main Gurdwara for the 'souls' of the above 'martyrs' to rest in peace. During the prayer, I could hear the sobs of weeping people. I myself, a novice in politics, sobbed and sobbed bitterly as at that time my experience about politicians was too limited to enable me to appreciate that whatever they said might not be actually meant. "The drama of the Sant's self-immolatory fast ended in a comedy. Those ten days that might have shaken India were packed with more sensations than had been experienced in the preceding twenty years of the Akali agaitation...The police and the military showed up in the streets.* All was set for the announced supreme sacrifice to take place according to schedule—3 p. m. of 27 December—when a word came from Delhi that Speaker Hukam Singh was on his way to Amritsar in a special plane.** Hazara Singh Gill, a dissident Akali leader, had installed himself at the head of a posse of his followers below the main

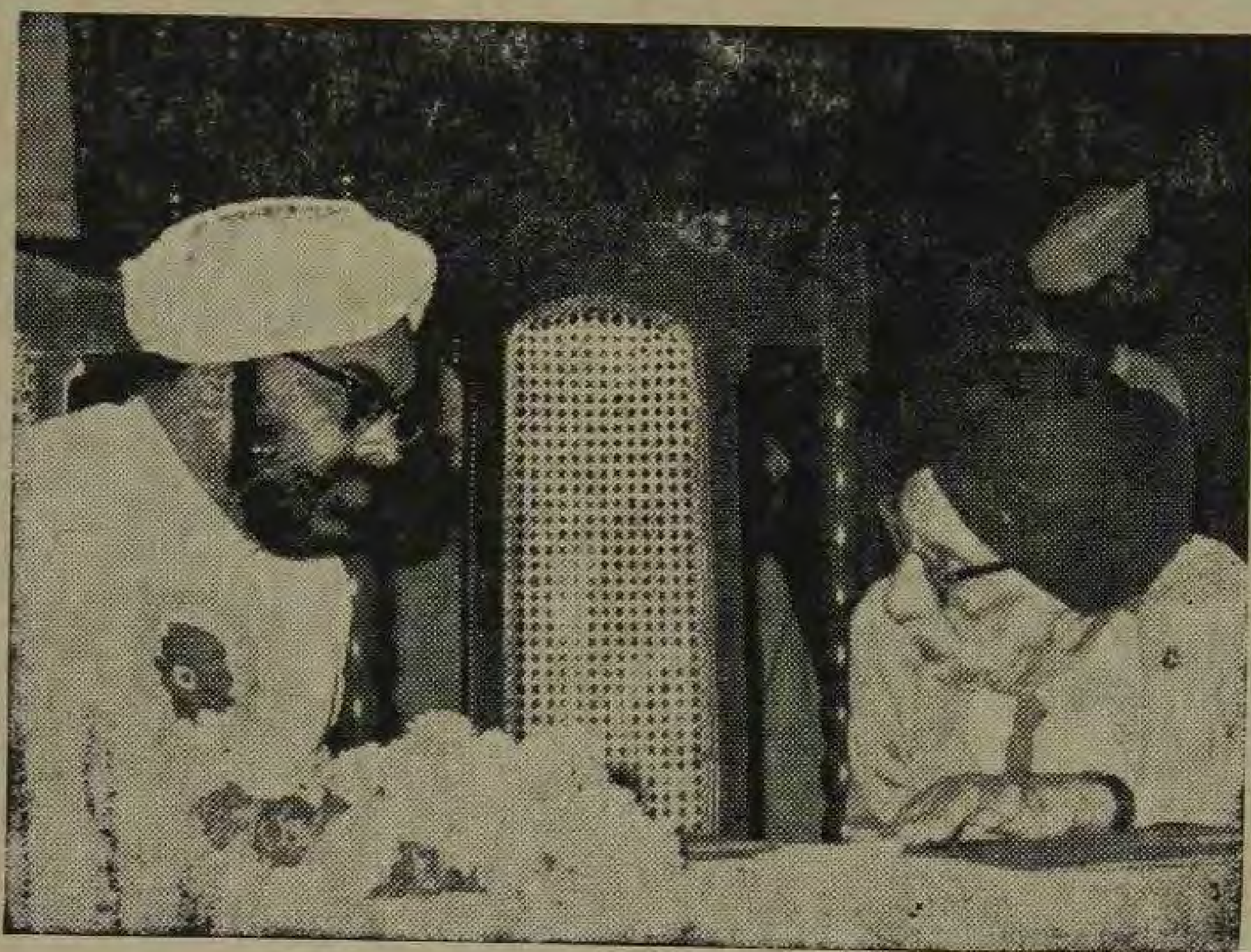
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*Amritsar City was virtually a war camp and it appeared as if the dooms day was going to be fall. Demons of sorrow and grief loomed large and everybody was uncertain as to what would happen. Master Ji had gone abroad. Most of the Akali leaders including S. Gurnam Singh and Giani Bhupinder Singh were arrested.

**Lachhman Singh Gill, Narinder Singh Brar & Uttam Singh Duggal succeeded in persuading Hukam Singh to come to Amritsar.

entrance to the Golden Temple. He had declared his intention to immolate himself after the Sant and four other martyrs to be had burnt themselves in succession. Of course, he had taken for granted that the Sant did not mean business. He was being uncharitable.

Hukam Singh had brought nothing in writing from the Union Home Minister to hand over to the Sant. But he told the large congregation that he had no doubt that Chandigarh belonged to Punjab and would return to it. He said that Mrs. Gandhi had agreed to arbitrate



When I sought the views of S. Hukam Singh on 14/1/79, as to whether he brought any assurance from the Prime Minister or not, he replied that whatever was said at Amritsar, was said in his personal capacity and no body much less the P. M. gave any assurance about Chandigarh etc. "I simply said that Chandigarh should go to Pb. and it will go to Pb." Picture shows S. Hukam Singh & S. Gurdial Singh Dhillon talking to each other at the 52nd A.I.S.E.C. at Kanpur in 1974.

on Chandigarh and that the central government was going to appoint a committee to go into the boundary dispute. The Sant himself announced afterwards that he had received "an assurance" that the demands that led him to fast would be met.. A few days after the Sant had ended his fast, Home Minister Chavan stated in Parliament that the government had given no assurance to the Sant. It was now the turn of the Master to taunt the Sant with cowardice. Fortunately for both the

Akali factions the fourth general election was already on their throats.(55)

When Master Ji came back from Iran & Afghanistan, he made the reason known of his absence during Sant Ji's fast : "I left India as I thought that Sant would throw the blame on me for abandoning his fast, therefore, it was ensured that he did not play his old trick again."

1967—ELECTIONS

On January 3, 67, Master Tara Singh returned to India after touring Iran and Iraq for 50 days. The Unity talks between the rival Akali Dals were initiated but they failed on 23/1/67, as Master said that the existence of 2 Akali Dals should not be admitted because Sant's Dal had no moral and constitutional grounds to exist. Master wanted the elections to be fought on one Akali symbol which was previously allotted to the Akali Dal before the split. The 3rd bone of contention was the Bhatinda Parliamentary seat. Master wanted Dhanna Singh Gulshan and Sant wanted his motor driver, Kikar Singh, to be adopted as the candidates. Sant group had an electoral alliance with the Communists.

General elections were held in February, 67, and the party-wise results in the 104—Member House of the State Assembly were : Congress 48, Akali Dal (Sant) 24, Akali Dal (Master) 2, Jan Sangh 9, C. P. I. 5, C. P. M. 3, Republican 3, S. S. P. 1 and Independents 9.

RISE OF THE UNITED PEOPLE'S FRONT MINISTRY

7—non—Congress parties, Akali Dals (Master & Sant), Republican Party, C. P. I., C. P. M., Jan Sangh, Samyukta Socialist Party and Independents, reached an alliance on 4/3/67, when 49 legislators joined hands to form the United People's Front Ministry. A 5—man Ministry consisting of Gurnam Singh, Baldev Prakash (Dr.) Lachhman Singh Gill, Rajinder Singh and Piara Ram was sworn in at 5 P. M. on 8/3/67, ushering in the first non-Congress Govt. in Pb. On 4/4/67, the first expansion of the Ministry took place when oath was administered to 5 new members of the cabinet. Sat Pal Dang (CPI) was taken as the Minister while B. N. Makkar, Darbara Singh, Faqir Chand and Satnam Singh Bajwa were sworn in as the Dy. Ministers. The 2nd expansion took place on 5/5/67, when Balwant Singh was adjusted as the Minister, while Baloo Ram and Gurmit Singh were sworn in as the Ministers of State. Jagtar Singh and Shiv Chand were inducted as the Dy. Ministers. All these had defected from the Congress except Tikka Jagtar Singh, who had earlier defected from the Front to join the Congress. He again



Some of the Ministers in the United Front Ministry standing with Mrs. Indira Gandhi, at Ludhiana, in 1967.
Standing (L to R) : Jagjit Singh (Dr.), Lachhman Singh Gill, D. D. Khanna, Gurnam Singh, Darbara Singh, P. M., Jagtar Singh (Tikka), Baldev Parkash (Dr.), Gurcharan Singh Nihalsinghwala. B. N. Makkar & Iqbal Singh. Sitting (L to R) : Piara Ram Dhannowali, Balwant Singh, Rajinder Singh Sparrow, Shiv Chand, Baloo Ram & Krishan Lal.

returned to the Front's fold. Later on Krishan Lal and Gurcharan Singh* were added as the Minister and the Chief Parliamentary Secy. respectively. The number of the office-holders went upto 20 when on 21/11/67, 3 Parliamentary Secys. (Giani Bakhtawar Singh, S. Shingra Singh and Mr. Harbhaj Ram) were administered the oath of office and secrecy. According to the C. M., the Ministry was expanded "on account of increased work-load and also in response to the wishes of the people" but obviously, the allurements had to be given to keep the flock together. In the struggle for survival, the ideals and the programmes for which the Front was formed, were thrown to the winds. This be noted that it was the Congress first which set the process of defection in motion with Bhajan Lal as the first defector from the Front to join the Congress Party.

*He took Oath on 7/4/67

FALL OF THE UNITED PEOPLE'S FRONT MINISTRY

(Maharaja of Patiala & Hudiara form their respective groups)

Some members of the United Front were not satisfied, therefore, on 24-5-67, they formed a separate group in the Assembly under the leadership of Maharaja Patiala. It comprised Maharaja of Patiala, Darbara Singh, Jagjit Singh (Dr.), Faqir Chand, Ram Parkash (Mahant), Shingara Singh, Narinder Singh (Raja) and Sardara Singh Kohli. They alleged that 11-point programme was not being honestly implemented, but on the same day they issued the statement that they would continue to be the Front's Members. "Towards the end of May, there was intense activity among the opposition M.L.As as they wanted to have a trial of strength with the Govt. in the Legislative Assembly. There were 12 legislators who were supposed to be sitting on the fence and were being wooed by both the sides. On the other hand, S. Harcharan Singh Hudiara was getting more and more disgruntled with the Front. The main cause of his dissatisfaction was that as the leader of the Akali Party he should have been made the Chief Minister. To add to his mortification, he was not being offered even a seat in the cabinet. He accused the Sant Dal of having betrayed the Sikh masses." (56) The no-confidence motion was tabled by Congress opposition against the 80—day U.F.M. but it failed on 26-5-67, in 104-Member Vidhan Sabha by 57 to 46 votes. Harcharan Singh Hudiara, Hazara Singh Gill and Maharaja of Patiala voted with the Congress. As a consequence of that, Hudiara, H. S. Gill and their supporters (Shiv Singh Jhawan and Arjan Singh Budhiraja) were expelled from the Akali Dal the same day. Hudiara organised the 3rd Akali Dal on 26/5. A meeting of about 200 persons was held at Chandigarh where a resolution expressing lack of confidence in Sant's leadership was passed. During the interview, Hudiara told that he and Sant fell out as the latter was unwilling to get Punjabi introduced at the Secretariat and the Distt. levels. Hudiara's Dal did not cut ice as its wire-puller, L. S. Gill, remained at the helm of affairs only upto 23-8-68.

The Ministry was the oddest of all coalitions as its constituents had different idealogies: some were rightists, some moderate leftists and some were extreme leftists. Rarewala dubbed the Ministry as a "marriage of inconveniences." "Gurnam Singh, a retired Judge, could not carry on with fellow Akalis. Moreover, he was averse to being dictated by the unlettered Akali High Command comprising two Sants, Sant Fateh Singh and Sant Chanan Singh. Advantage of the Chief Minister's estrangement with the High Command was taken by the ambitious Lachhman

Singh Gill, who commanded a larger following in the Sant group, to scuttle the coalition. Three-quarters of the Sant group acknowledged his leadership. (57) When the Pb. Assembly met for the Session on 22/11/67, Lachhman Singh Gill along with his supporters defected from the Front and formed 'Janta Party' consisting of 17 Members: L. S. Gill, P. R. Dhannowali, Faqir Chand, B. N. Makkar, Ram Parkash (Mahant), Karnail Singh, P. S. Majitha, Harbhajan Singh, Jasdev Singh, Narinder Singh (Raja), Jagjit Singh (Dr.), Bakhtawar Singh, Shingara Singh, Gurcharan Singh, S. S. Kohli, Hardit Singh & Natha Singh. With the above defection, the party position in the Assembly was: U. F. 41, Janta Party 17, Independents 2, Congress 44. On 22/11/67, Front's Ministry resigned. Master Tara Singh, the veteran Akali leader died the same day.

MASTER TARA SINGH

(24/6/1885—22/11/1967)



Picture relates to the occasion when Master Tara Singh attended the meeting of the Central Sikh League at Amritsar on 8/4/1931. (L to R) : Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafir, Not known, Udham Singh Nagoke, Master Tara Singh, Santa Singh Sultanwind, Nahar Singh...

"...Master Tara Singh, an old man with a white beard, twinkling brown eyes (had) a voice like a dove in conversation and like a hawk in public speech..."*

"Master Ji's major attributes were reflected in his face especiallly in his eyes. He was a *Kashatriya* to the core and on top of it, he was a Sikh ironside of Guru Gobind Singh. He had a will which knew no compromise. As a ture Sikh, he was friendly to all inimical to none, humble, ever active in the service of man. But, alas! he lacked the tact,

*See "The Last Days of British Raj"

the jugglery, the sophistication, the secretiveness, the exhibitionism that are associated with a successful politician". (Dr. Mohan Singh Diwana)

"...it is remarkable how one man (Master Tara Singh) could control an organisation like the Akali Dal for more than 30 year...(He) has been known as the trainer of political leaders in the Punjab..."

He could walk alone. (Author) (Baldev Raj Nayyar)

The moment I write, think, or hear about Master Tara Singh, I am invariably reminded of the resounding cry which used to be uttered in Akali meeting and particularly Akali conferences: "*Tara Singh Jarnail de hundian, Panth Khalsa gajjega.*" (So long as Tara Singh, the supreme leader, is alive, *Panth Kalsa* will be at the pinnacle of glory). Shiromani Akali Dal and Master Tara Singh had been the two sides of the same coin. He was an institution which gave a new meaning and dignity to Sikh politics. "Tara Singh...of village Harial (District Rawalpindi),



Dr. Mohan Singh Diwana

When I interviewed Dr. Diwana, my greatest wonder was as to how one small head could carry all he knew and for so long. During our conversation, he questioned "Do you think God in India is different from God in USA or USSR? Do Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs possess separate or distinct Gods? If it is not so, what do the people fight for?" Unfortunately, the Sikhs could not make full use of his divinely gifted talent. On post-partition reorganisation, he said, "Perhaps if Master Ji had accepted the British offer of a Sikh buffer State, it could have been the best for all the 3 parties." when questioned as to whether or not the community became leaderless after the death of Master Ji and Sant Ji, he commented, "The community has been producing leaders needed all along the line ; in addition, we are too dynamic and too well-entrenched in tradition to remain leaderless." B. 17th March, 1899, Distt. Rawalpindi, now in West Pakistan. Educated in Lahore, Calcutta and London. Obtained his Ph. D. from Calcutta University in 1931 and D. Litt. from Punjab University in 1933. Presided over All India Oriental Conference, Religion and Philosophy Section, Ahmedabad. Presided over Philosophy Congress Social Science Section Candy. Lectured in America from 1969 to 74. He is the author of Discoveries in the Adi Granth, Sikh Mysticism, Guru Nanak Dev and Sahaj, A History of Punjabi Literature, New Light on Guru Gobind Singh etc.)

was the son of a Hindu of the Malhotra caste. He was converted to Sikhism while at school, educated at Rawalpindi and then at the Khalsa College, Amritsar. After taking his degree in 1907, he took a diploma in teaching and became a teacher in the Khalsa High School, Layallpur : the title "master" has attached to his name ever since. He joined the Akali movement at its inception and became dominant figure in Sikh affairs in the 1930's. Master Tarn Singh has published many works on religion, politics and fiction of which the better known are *Baba Tega Singh* and *Prem Lagan*. Two papers, *Prabhat* (dawn) in Urdu and *Jathedar* in Gurmukhi publicise his views." (58) "It is significant of the time that though his family was Hindu it revered the Sikh Gurus. Nanak Chand's interest in Sikhism was stimulated in his school days. The Singh Sabha movement* was extremely active at the time, and he regularly attended the Sabha meetings. Before 1962 his unique position among the Sikh masses was due to the kind of image of himself that he was able to project as the only consistent and long-suffering upholder of the doctrine of the Panth as a separate political entity, as the one Sikh political leader who relentlessly pursued the goal of political power territorially organised for the Sikh community, and as a selfless and dedicated leader without personal ambition...His personal character was considered by the Sikh masses to be above reproach, an element that weighs strongly with the Indian people. His honesty was often remarked upon, and was the reason why the Sikh masses and big businessmen were willing to trust him with liberal contributions. Whatever other criticisms were made of him, no man in the street doubted his personal incorruptibility. Over and above all this was his mass appeal to the Sikh community, for he knew how to reach the core of the Sikh heart, the sentiment for the Sikh religion, and induce great religious-cum-political fervour." (59)

When I solicited the views of Dr. Joyce Pettigrew, she remarked, "The Sikh leadership under Master Tara Singh endeavoured (though did not succeed) to work in the narrow orbit of its own cultural community and was totally ignorant of the manner of mobilization and action required for effective presentation of their case in the wider and more cosmopolitan world arena. Masterji's life and struggle has been useful in illuminating the problems attached to any movement for Sikh independence. No leader has so successfully embodied the entity of Panth

*He came into prominence when Akali Movement ushered a new dawn in the Sikh World.


Dr. Narinder Kaur Sobti

Dr. Mrs. N. K. Sobti, a philanthropist & a noted gynecologist. In connection with this book, she was kind enough to have granted interview on 3/7/77, of course, with a reluctance. She is gifted with a graceful personality and is possessed of indescribable sweetness and femininity. When her views on Master Tara Singh were invited, she said, "If Baba Kharak Singh (1867-1963) died as a* betaj badshah *(the uncrowned king) of the Sikhs, Master Ji died as the Sikhs' most powerful fighter." When request was made to comment about the performance of various Chief Ministers of Pb., she said that she was too small a fry to comment. When I continued to persist for the reply, she put off the matter by quoting : "Comparisons are odious. Mortals are equal; their masks differ."*

in its cultural and historical aspects. Nevertheless, I must regret that he did not place his sense of the destiny of Panth beside that of S. Partap S. Kairon's social and economic vision of the Pb. of the future. An alliance** between the two would have been to the Sikhs' benefit."

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*In court proceedings in the case "Crown V Khark Singh and others" he asked the Court whether the case against him was by the Govt. and being told that it was, he said that as the Govt. was the prosecutor and the court its servant, he did not want to make any statement to the court, because a party could not arrogate to itself the functions of a judge. The accused's positson as President of the Panth (the Sikh Nation) was similar to that of the United States of America, France and Germany." (Civil and Military Gazette dated 4/12/1921.) "To protest against the treatment of his fellow Akalis and the ban on Gandhi caps for non-Sikh prisoners, Baba Kharak Singh serving his sentence of four year's rigorous imprisonment refused to wear anything more than his *kach* even on the coldest days. He was kept in solitary confinement for over six months."(60)

**The author does not subscribe to her views. She seems to be unaware of the 'game' through which Sikhs' energy was frittered away by putting Kairon against Master. Master's political descendency led Kairon's ouster from the political arena.



Dr. Joyce Pettigrew, the author of Robber Noblemen. She is a Lecturer of Social Anthropology in the Queen's University of Belfast. S. Khushwant Singh had introduced her to Master Tara Singh.

I have been fortunate to sit at Master's feet. His psychological analysis of an individual and the masses was simply superb. He not only kept the workers' pride in tact but also boosted the same. He worked his way into the workers' hearts as 'a river unnoticably covers the banks which dominate it.' How he used to come to the rescue of his associates can be ascertained from the fact that he went to the length of appearing as a court witness in S. Kapur Singh's case. Samuel Butler said, "One of the first businesses of a sensible man is to know when he is beaten and to leave off fighting atonce. Whenever Master suffered a defeat either in the Gurdwara poll or in the General elections, he would retire or become incommunicado giving his rivals a chance to work uninterruptedly. (On 20/1/65, Master Ji left for Salogra and on 27/2/67, he became suddently incommunicado.) The details of his arrests had been given at pages 145, 156, 161, 167, 193, 200, 229 and 230 of this book. Besides that, he was also arrested in DIR in the month of March, 1966. It is, indeed, very rare to find so many and so great qualities in one person.

A few months before his death, Masterji directed me to hand-over the letters to two business-men so that money could be arranged for holding a big Akali Conference but to my utter disgust both of them refused point blank to part with even a single penny. In good old days, they used to spend thousands of rupees on Master's call but when he fell on adverse days, they cared a fig for him or his letters. It also fell to my lot to see an all-time great Master being so soon neglected during the fag-end of his life. The people who used to fling themselves at Master's feet completely ignored him when he was lying in the PGI at Chandigarh. If he could be made to sit on the elephant (See picture at p. 180) he was also put unhesitatingly on the mat (See pictures at ps. 227 and 228). In politics, nothing is static and nothing can be taken for granted.